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THE POETS' LIFE OF CHRIST

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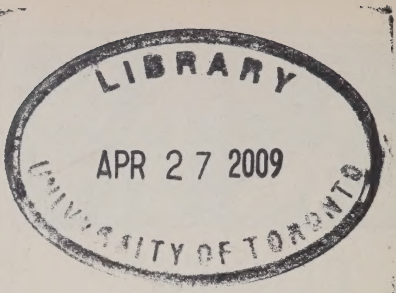

O Thou! whose Spirit did at first inflame
And warm the dead,
And by a sacred incubation fed
With life this frame,
Which once had neither being, form, nor name,
Grant I may so
Thy steps track here below,
That in these masques and shadows I may see
Thy sacred way;
And by those hid ascents climb to that day
Which breaks from thee,
Who art in all things, though invisibly!

HENRY VAUGHAN.

Printed in England

INTRODUCTION

IN this anthology I have deliberately avoided including poems which may be found in collections of hymns, both because these are so well known, and because they have acquired associations which give them to many minds a value other than, and different from, that which attaches to poetry as such.

My aim has been to reveal the extent to which the life and teaching of Christ have inspired the poets of the English-speaking race—and not least those who are not famed for their specifically religious poetry,—as well as to illustrate that wonderful life itself by the poems thus inspired.

To this end I have brought together poems from widely varied sources, many of them not available to the general reader. Thus, old Miracle Plays, the contents of mediaeval, sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts, and the Elizabethan music-books, have been laid under contribution; as well as old Ballads and Broadsides, and Carols of immemorial antiquity, some in their oldest extant form, and others in the versions sung in the West of England less than a hundred years ago. These pieces are mostly anonymous, but often of unique beauty. The majority of the selections, however, are from the poets whose names are familiar to every one; and many are by poets whose works and even names are undeservedly forgotten except by special students of literature. Of the poems of the last fifty years I have,

by the kind permission of authors and publishers, been enabled to include a large number. A few of the ancient and rather more of the modern poems are here printed for the first time.

The selections, numbering nearly four hundred, are arranged in such an order that the story of Christ's life, including the greater part of his teaching, is followed step by step from the Annunciation to the Ascension; so that they form, not a mere miscellany of Christian poetry, or of poems about Christ, but—as a glance at the 'Scheme and Contents' will show—in a very real sense, a 'Poets' Life of Christ'. For although it includes the work of so many and such different hands, the collection has both continuity and coherence; and this, I hope, such as will seem to give it something of the aesthetic unity of a single and complete work of art. It is indeed remarkable to what degree the convergence along different lines of the imaginative insight of so many gifted individuals has a cumulative effect, and results in a single impression of the One Figure. And it is a striking testimony to the universal appeal of that life, that, contemplating it, such diverse minds seem to be fused to the same white heat of inspiration, and, in spite of the passing centuries, speak the same language of adoration and love.

The extent to which the reflective mind of the race has become permeated with ideas ultimately derived from Christ has more and more been brought home to me by the perusal of the works of some two or three hundred poets, which this task has entailed. For that reason I have thought it desirable, indeed all but imperative, to include

certain poems which seem to illustrate the deeper meaning of the particular sayings in the Gospels with which I have connected them—even when, in all probability, they were not consciously inspired by them.

In an anthology ranging over seven centuries of literature, wherein poems written as far apart in time as the years 1350 and 1922 may follow one another, it seemed essential that the reader's thought should not be distracted by irrelevant variations in the ever-changing conventions of spelling, punctuation, and the use of capitals. Accordingly spelling and punctuation have been in general conformed to modern usage; and in view of the special nature of the subject it seemed most appropriate to follow the English Bible in its sparing use of capitals. On the other hand, archaic words occurring in the text I have, with one or two rare exceptions, retained, preferring rather to explain them by means of foot-notes than to risk injury to the delicate fabric of the poem by the introduction of modern equivalents. Wherever a vowel, now mute or vanished, was formerly sounded, it is indicated by a diaeresis, thus—lovëd, salvatïon, mildë; and an obsolete stress in pronunciation is shown by an accent, if such appeared desirable, thus—dèspiśed. I should add that in order to make the selections as fully representative as possible, both of the poets and of the best of their work, without exceeding unduly the size convenient for a companionable book, I have freely used the anthologist's time-honoured right of excision; but never, I believe, without indicating the fact. And I have ventured to transpose a stanza in three cases where excerpts have been made from long poems.

The chronological sequence of events is based on St. Mark—that being the oldest of the Gospels. As regards the order, however, of the incidents and teaching not recorded therein, that being a matter much debated among New Testament students, I have thought it simpler to accept in the main the arrangement suggested in the scholarly 'Harmony of the Gospels' by Steevens and Burton. And it should also be explained that where 'texts' are quoted as titles to the poems, I have followed the Authorized or the Revised Version as in each case seemed best to fit in with the poet's thought.

The illustrations are intended to mark off emphatically the twelve main sections into which the subject-matter naturally falls. Hence they have, from the technical standpoint, necessarily been treated in a decorative rather than a realistic manner. The representation of the Christus presents a difficulty really insuperable. There is a traditional picture, which, though having no claim to be regarded as a portrait, is the creation of a series of the greatest artists of the past: but this has since too often tended to degenerate towards sentimentality. Obviously it would have been inappropriate in this particular book to break away entirely from a tradition familiar to the great majority of English poets. To many minds it is hallowed by sacred associations; to others, however, it has come to suggest a conventional conception of the character of the Master. Accordingly, although it would have been easier, and perhaps safer, to adhere to it strictly, I have thought it better to attempt to recast it. My main endeavour has been to visualize that full humanity which was once seen in

Palestine—to recall the man who could speak with authority to maniac or multitude, but with whom little children could romp and chatter: who was ever himself, alike amid the Hosannas of the mob and when they clamoured 'Crucify': to whom the empire of the World was a real temptation, but who chose instead to die for it.

My thanks are due to the following poets, whose ready permission has enabled me to include something of their work—to Mr. Robert Bridges, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Rev. R. L. Gales, Mr. Robert Graves, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mrs. Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Mr. Laurence Housman, Mrs. Alice Meynell, and Mrs. Margaret L. Woods; and also to Mrs. Dowden and Mrs. Patmore for poems by Edward Dowden and Coventry Patmore; to Mr. G. A. Rossetti for a sonnet by W. M. Rossetti; to Mr. Wilfrid Meynell for Francis Thompson's poem; to Mr. Edmund Blunden for the stanzas by John Clare; to Mr. Andrew Melrose for a poem by W. C. Smith; and to the literary executors of Father Tabb and Father Ryder for such of their poems as I have used.

I have also to thank the publishers who have allowed me to reprint poems from the copyright works, as follows:

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N. A.

OXFORD, 1922.

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Prelude

Hear the voice of the bard!
Who present, past, and future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walked among the ancient trees,

Calling the lapsëd soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
That might control
The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew!

'O Earth, O Earth, return!
Arise from out the dewy grass!
Night is worn,
And the morn
Rises from the slumbrous mass.

'Turn away no more;
Why wilt thou turn away?
The starry floor,
The watery shore,
Is given thee till the break of day.'

WILLIAM BLAKE.

BORN OF MARY

When love of us called him to see
If we'd vouchsafe his company,
He left his Father's court, and came
Lightly as a lambent flame,
Leaping upon the hills, to be
The humble King of you and me.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Neither in halls nor yet in bowers
  Born would he not be,
Neither in castles nor yet in towers
  That seemly were to see;
But at his Father's will
The prophecy to fulfil,
  Betwixt an ox and an ass
  Jesus, this king, born he was.
Heavèn he bring us 'till!

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY.

THE MOTHER OF JESUS

Adam lay y-bounden

ADAM lay y-bounden,
  Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
  Thought he not too long;
And all was for an apple,
  An apple that he took,
As clerkës finden written
  In their book.
Nor had the apple taken been,
  The apple taken been,
Nor had never our Lady
  A-been heaven's queen.
Blessëd be the time
  That apple taken was!
Therefore we may singen
  'Deo gratias'.

ANON. (15th Cent.).

Deo gratias] Thanks be to God.

Mary's Girlhood

THIS is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
God's virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
Profound simplicity of intellect,
And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.

So held she through her girlhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God
Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home,
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all,—yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed:
Because the fulness of the time was come.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

The Annunciation

The Angel Gabriel

THE angel Gabriel from God
Was sent to Galilee,
Unto a virgin fair and free,
Whose name was called Mary.
And when the angel thither came,
He fell down on his knee,
And looking up in the virgin's face
He said, 'All hail, Mary!'

Mary anon looked him upon,
And said, 'Sir, what are ye?
I marvel much at these tidings
Which thou hast brought to me.
Married I am unto an old man,
As the lot fell unto me;
Therefore, I pray, depart away,
For I stand in doubt of thee.'

'Mary,' he said, 'be not afraid,
But do believe in me:
The power of the Holy Ghost
Shall overshadow thee;
Thou shalt conceive without any grief,
As the Lord told unto me;
God's own dear Son from heaven shall come
And shall be born of thee.'

OLD CAROL.

'Thou shalt call his name Jesus'

COME, lovely Name; life of our hope!
Lo, we hold our hearts wide ope!
Unlock thy cabinet of day,
Dearest Sweet, and come away.
Lo, how the thirsty lands
Gasp for thy golden showers, with long-stretched hands!
Lo, how the labouring earth
That hopes to be
All heaven by thee,
Leaps at thy birth! . . .

Come, royal Name; and pay the expense
Of all this precious patïence;
O come away,
And kill the death of this delay.
O see so many worlds of barren years
Melted and measured out in seas of tears.
O see the weary lids of wakeful hope
(Love's eastern windows) all wide ope
With curtains drawn,
To catch the day-break of thy dawn.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'Behold the handmaid of the Lord'

I SING of a maiden
That is makëless;
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came all so still
There his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.
He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.
He came all so still
There his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

makëless] without a mate. ches] chose.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Godës mother be.

ANON. (15th Cent.).

The Visitation to Elisabeth

PROCLAIMËD queen and mother of a God,
The light of earth, the sovereign of saints,
With pilgrim foot up tiring hills she trod,
And heavenly stile with handmaids' toil acquaints:
Her youth to age, her self to sick she lends,
Her heart to God, to neighbour hand she bends. . .

Eternal lights, enclosëd in her breast,
Shot out such piercing beams of burning love,
That when her voice her cousin's ears possessed
The force thereof did force her babe to move:
With secret signs the children greet each other,
But open praise each leaveth to his mother.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Joseph Troubled

THE virgin was pure there was no nay;
The angel Gabriel to her did say,
'Thou shalt conceive a child this day,
The which shall be our dearest dear'. . .

BORN OF MARY

Joseph being a perfect mild man,
Perceiving that Mary with child was gone,
Said, ' Tell to me, Mary, and do not frown,
  Who hath done this, my dearest dear ? '

Then answered Mary, meek and mild,
' I know no father unto my child
But the Holy Ghost, and I undefiled,
  That hath done this, my dearest dear.'

But Joseph thinking her most unjust,
Yielding her body to unlawful lust,
Out of his house he thought for to thrust
  His own true love, his dearest dear.

But whilst in heart he thought the same,
The angel Gabriel to him came,
As he lay sleeping on a frame
  Still dreaming on his dearest dear ;

Who said, ' Fear not to take to thee
Thy true and faithful wife Mary ;
Most true and faithful is she to thee,
  Then turn not away thy dearest dear.'

When Joseph arose from his sleep so sound,
His love to Mary did more abound,
He would not for ten thousand pound
  Forsake his love and dearest dear.

TRADITIONAL CAROL.

The Birth of John the Baptist

AS Anne, long barren, mother did become
Of him who last was judge in Israel;
Thou, last of prophets born, like Samuel,
Didst from a womb past hope of issue come.
His mother, silent, spake; thy father, dumb,
Recovering speech, God's wonder did foretell;
He, after death, a prophet was in hell,
And thou, unborn, within thy mother's womb.

HENRY CONSTABLE.

No Sudden Thing of Glory

NO sudden thing of glory and fear
Was the Lord's coming; but the dear
Slow nature's days followed each other
To form the Saviour from his mother—
One of the children of the year.

The earth, the rain, received the trust,—
The sun and dews, to frame the Just.
He drew his daily life from these
According to his own decrees,
Who makes man from the fertile dust.

Sweet summer and the winter wild,
These brought him forth, the Undefiled.
The happy springs renewed again
His daily bread, the growing grain,
The food and raiment of the child.

ALICE MEYNELL.

Christ took our Nature

CHRIST took our nature on him, not that he
'Bove all things loved it, for the purity:
No, but he dressed him with our human trim,
Because our flesh stood most in need of him.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Expectation

OVER the apple-trees with their red load
In world's-end orchards, over dark yew woods,
O'er fires of sunset glassed in wizard streams,
O'er mill and meadow of those farthest lands,
Over the reapers, over the sere sails
Of homing ships and every breaking wave,
Over the haven and the entrancëd town,
O'er hearths aflame with fir-trunks and fir-cones,
Over the children playing in the streets,
Over the harpers harping on the bridge,
O'er lovers in their dream and their desire,
There falls from the high heaven a subtle sense
Of presage and a deep, expectant hush,
And the wise watchers know the time draws on
And that amid the snows of that same year
The earth will bear her longed-for perfect Fruit.

RICHARD LAWSON GALES.

THE NATIVITY

No Room in the Inn

WHEN Caesar Augustus had raised a taxation,
He assessed all the people that dwelt in the nation;
The Jews at that time being under Rome's sway
Appeared in the city their tribute to pay;
When Joseph and Mary, who from David did spring,
Went up to the city of David their king,
And there being entered, cold welcome they find;
From the rich to the poor they are mostly unkind.

They sought entertainment, but none could they find,
Great numbers of strangers had fillëd the inn;
They knockëd and callëd all this at the door,
But found not a friend where kind they had store;
Their kindred accounted they were come too soon,
Too late, said the innkeeper, here is no room.
Amongst strangers and kinsfolk cold welcome they find;
From the rich to the poor they are mostly unkind.

Good Joseph was troubled, but most for his dear,
For her blessed burden whose time now drew near;
His heart with true sorrow was sorely afflicted
That his virgin spouse was so rudely neglected;
He could get no houseroom, who houses did frame,
But Joseph and Mary must go as they came;
For little is the favour the poor man can find;
From the rich to the poor they are mostly unkind.

Whilst the great and the wealthy do frolic in hall,
Possess all the ground-rooms and chambers and all;
Whilst Joseph and Mary thrust into a stable
In Bethlehem city, ground inhospitable;
And with their mean lodging contented they be,
For the minds of the just with their fortunes agree,
They bear all affronts with their meekness of mind,
And be not offended though the rich be unkind.

TRADITIONAL CAROL.

As Joseph was a-walking

AS Joseph was a-walking,
He heard an angel sing:
'This night shall be born
Our heavenly king.

'He neither shall be born
In housen nor in hall,
Nor in the place of paradise,
But in an ox's stall.

'He neither shall be clothëd
In purple nor in pall,
But all in fair linen,
As were babies all.

'He neither shall be rockëd
In silver nor in gold,
But in a wooden cradle
That rocks on the mould.

'He neither shall be christened
In white wine nor in red,
But with the fair spring water
With which we were christenëd.'

OLD CAROL

Christ is Born

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

IN the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;

Enough for him whom angels
  Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
  Which adore.

Angels and archangels
  May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
  Thronged the air,
But only his mother
  In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Belovëd
  With a kiss.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

New Prince, New Pomp

BEHOLD a silly, tender babe,
  In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies,
  Alas! a piteous sight.
The inns are full, no man will yield
  This little pilgrim bed;
But forced he is with silly beasts
  In crib to shroud his head.
Despise him not for lying there;
  First what he is inquire:
An orient pearl is often found
  In depth of dirty mire.
Weigh not his crib, his wooden dish,
  Nor beasts that by him feed;

silly] simple, happy.

Weigh not his mother's poor attire,
Nor Joseph's simple weed.
This stable is a prince's court,
The crib his chair of state;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is come from heaven:
This pomp is prizëd there.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

The Snow

HIS softest feathers winter thither sent
To be a pillow for the infant's head;
For sure no harm the honest season meant
When in the cave his fluttering snow he spread:
But at his presence into tears it fell,
Checked by a whiter, chaster spectacle.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

Mary's Complaint

'AH, my dear son,' said Mary, 'ah, my dear,
Kiss thy mother, Jesu, with a laughing cheer.'

This enders night I saw a sight
All in my sleep:
Mary, that may, she sang 'Lullay'
And sore did weep;

enders] last. may] maiden.

To keep she sought full fast about
Her son from cold.
Joseph said, 'Wife, my joy, my life,
Say what ye wold.'
'No thing, my spouse, is in this house
Unto my pay;
My son, a king that made all thing,
Lieth in hay.'

'Ah, my dear son,' said Mary, 'ah, my dear,
Kiss thy mother, Jesu, with a laughing cheer.'

ANON. (15th Cent.).

Mary to her Child

JESU, sweetë sonë dear!
On poorful bed liest thou here,
And that me grieveth sore;
For thy cradle is as a bier,
Ox and assë be thy fere,
Weep I may therefore.

Jesu, sweetë, be not wroth
Though I have not clout nor cloth
Thee in for to fold,
Thee in to foldë nor to wrap;
For I have not clout nor lap;
But lay thou thy feet to my pap
And wite thee from the cold.

ANON. (14th Cent.).

wold] would, would have. pay] content, liking.
fere] companions. lap] wrap. wite] guard, keep.

About the Middle Hour

ABOUT the middle hour of night,
When northern streamers fly,
Betwixt day-light and candle-light,
Was heard the babe's first cry.

The ass said to the ox: 'Brother,
Right honoured are we twain
Who house the babe and babe's mother
Against the night and rain.'

The ox him answered: 'Yea, brother;
Blessëd our grass to yield
To bed the Lord and Lord's mother,
Who else had lain afield.'

O, what is fast, and what is feast
Where such sweet fare is spread?
The baby at his mother's breast
With her dear milk is fed.

And now: 'Come kneel with me, brother,
This goodly sight to see.'
Before the child and child's mother,
The twain have bent the knee.

And then: 'Come weep with me, brother,
For stony hearts of men.'
For ruth of babe and babe's mother
Their tears fall down like rain.

With streamers in the northern skies,
  While Bedlam slept in sin,
The Lord hath opened paradise
  And bade the beasts come in.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.

The Creatures' Nowel

WHERE Mary keeps her court
With the humble and the high,
The little dog has sport
For he is also by.

The creatures of the earth
They have great joy and mirth
On the night of the great birth.

The hedgehog and the hare
Are of that birth aware,
Their timid footsteps go,
Quick, furtive, over the snow,
They come through the cold
The young child to behold,
In the stable bare.

They have no fear there,
No hurt and no annoy,
But great bliss and joy
With the baby boy,
In that safe stable's shade
With none to make afraid,
To kill or to destroy.

Bedlam] Bethlehem.

The lamb in his white fleece
Plays with the wolf in peace,
The leopard lies down with the kid;
The ox and the ass they bid
The lion to share their straw;
All creatures tame or wild
Are there with the little child;
The ox says 'moo', and the ass 'hee-haw'.

RICHARD LAWSON GALES.

The Adoration of the Shepherds

The Angel of the Lord

IN Bethlehem, that noble place,
As by prophecy said it was,
Of the virgin Mary, full of grace,
Salvator mundi natus est.

On Christmas night an angel it told
To the shepherds keeping their fold,
That in Bethlehem with beastës wold,
Salvator mundi natus est.

The shepherdës were compassed right
About them was a great light:
'Dread ye nought,' said the angel bright,
'Salvator mundi natus est.

Salvator, &c.] The Saviour of the world is born.
beastës wold] ? beasts' protection, or shelter.

'Behold to you we bring great joy,
For why, Jesus is born this day;
To us of Mary, that mildë may,
Salvator mundi natus est.

'And thus in faith find it ye shall,
Lying poorly in an ox's stall.'
The shepherds then lauded God all,
Quia Salvator mundi natus est.

OLD CAROL (16th Cent.).
(Refrain omitted.)

The Heavenly Host

THE shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than,
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger strook;
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringëd noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close...

may] maiden. Quia] Because. than] then. silly] simple.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced night arrayed:
The helmëd cherubim
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire
With unexpressive notes to heaven's new-born heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
(If ye have power to touch our senses so,)
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony.

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold,

unexpressive] inexpressible.

And speckled vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould,
And hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

JOHN MILTON.

The Shepherds

THE shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed,
Where the virgin-mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the babe, that at her bosom clung,
A mother's song the virgin-mother sung.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng,
Around them shone, suspending night,
While, sweeter than a mother's song,
Blest angels heralded the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high! and peace on earth.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the babe she pressed;
And while she cried, 'The babe is mine!'
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, peace on earth! the Prince of peace is born.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

The Shepherds' Offerings

AS I out rode this enders night,
Of three jolly shepherds I saw a sight,
And all about their fold a star shone bright;
They sang terli, terlow;
So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow.

[*The Shepherds approach and worship the Babe.*]

FIRST SHEPHERD:

Hail, maidë, mother, and wife so mild!
As the angel said, so have we fond.
I have nothing to present with thy child
But my pipe; hold, hold, take it in thy hond,
Wherein much pleasure that I have fond;
And now, to honour thy glorious birth,
Thou shalt it have to make thee mirth.

SECOND SHEPHERD:

Now, hail be thou, child, and thy dame!
For in a poor lodging here art thou laid,
So the angel said and told us thy name;
Hold, take thou here my hat on thy head!
And now of one thing thou art well sped,
For weather thou hast no need to complain,
For wind, or sun, hail, snow, and rain.

THIRD SHEPHERD:

Hail be thou, Lord over water and landïs!
For thy coming all we may make mirth.
Have here my mittens to put on thy hondïs,
Other treasure have I none to present thee with.

enders] last. fond] found.

MARY:

Now herdmen hend,
For your coming,
To my child shall I pray,
As he is heaven's King,
To grant you his blessing,
And to his bliss that ye may wend
At your last day.

[*There the Shepherds singeth again, and goeth forth of the place.*]

Down from heaven, from heaven so high,
Of angels there came a great company,
With mirth and joy and great solemnity,
They sang terli, terlow;
So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY.

The Shepherds' Song

COME, we shepherds, whose blest sight
Hath met Love's noon in nature's night;
Come, lift we up our loftier song,
And wake the sun that lies too long.

Gloomy night embraced the place
Where the noble infant lay:
The babe looked up, and showed his face;
In spite of darkness, it was day:
It was thy day, Sweet! and did rise
Not from the east, but from thine eyes.

hend] courteous.

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
  Young dawn of our eternal day;
We saw thine eyes break from their east,
  And chase the trembling shades away:
We saw thee, and we blessed the sight,
We saw thee by thine own sweet light.

Welcome, all wonders in one sight!
  Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter! day in night!
  Heaven in earth! and God in man!
Great little One, whose all-embracing birth,
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

RICHARD CRASHAW
(Selected stanzas).

'*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God*'

FORTH they went and glad they were,
  Going they did sing;
With mirth and solace they made good cheer
  For joy of that new tiding.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY.

The Chilling Winter's Morn

WHY does the chilling winter's morn
  Smile like a field beset with corn;
Or smell like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus on the sudden? Come and see
The cause why things thus fragrant be:

'Tis he is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and lustre, public mirth,
To heaven and the under-earth.

We see him come, and know him ours,
Who, with his sunshine and his showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

ROBERT HERRICK.

Circumcision's Song

PREPARE for songs; he's come, he's come!
And be it sin here to be dumb,
And not with lutes to fill the room.

Cast holy water all about,
And have a care no fire goes out,
But 'cense the porch, and place throughout.

The altars all on fire be;
The storax fries; and ye may see
How heart and hand do all agree
To make things sweet. Yet all less sweet than he.

Bring him along, most pious priest,
And tell us then, whenas thou see'st
His gently-gliding, dove-like eyes,
And hear'st his whimpering and his cries,
How canst thou this babe circumcise?

Ye must not be more pitiful than wise;
For, now unless ye see him bleed,
Which makes the baptism, 'tis decreed
The birth is fruitless. Then the work God speed.

Touch gently, gently touch; and here
Spring tulips up through all the year;
And from his sacred blood, here shed,
May roses grow, to crown his own dear head.

Back, back again; each thing is done
With zeal alike, as 'twas begun;
Now, singing, homeward let us carry
The babe unto his mother Mary;
And when we have the child commended
To her warm bosom, then our rites are ended.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Presentation in the Temple

A PAIR of turtle doves our Lady bears
To purchase back from God her child divine;
Within her eyes the lights of Christmas shine;
The shepherds' 'Peace' and 'Glory' still she hears;
The name of Jesus, source of all her fears
And all her joys, she whispers at the shrine,
Whence she will bear him back without repine,
To work God's will throughout the coming years.

A pair of doves she brings, and in God's fane
The voice melodious of doves is heard;
For Simeon chants his glad, triumphant strain,
While Anne, responsive to the heavenly word,
Most sweetly murmurs to the longing choir
The speedy grant of Israel's desire.

THOMAS EDWARD BRIDGETT.

'A pair of turtledoves'

WHY, Favourite of heaven most fair,
Dost thou bring fowls for sacrifice?
Will not the armful thou dost bear,
That lovely Lamb of thine, suffice?

THOMAS BANCROFT.

The Infant Christ

Sweet Dreams, form a Shade

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child. . .

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay, and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

The Virgin's Cradle-Hymn

SLEEP, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

Mary's Song

THAT yongë child when it gan weep,
With song she lullëd him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passëd allë minstrelsy.
The nightingalë sang also:
Her voice is hoarse and nought thereto:
Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first, then doth he wrong.

ANON. (14th Cent.).

Go, Pretty Child

GO, pretty child, and bear this flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
And tell him, by that bud now blown,
He is the rose of Sharon known.
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his bib, or stomacher;
And tell him, for good hansel too,
That thou hast brought a whistle new,
Made of a clean straight oaten reed,
To charm his cries, at time of need.
Tell him, for coral thou hast none,
But if thou hadst, he should have one;
But poor thou art, and known to be
Even as moneyless as he.
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
From those mellifluous lips of his;
Then never take a second on,
To spoil the first impression.

ROBERT HERRICK.

CHILDHOOD

A lovely son (my child), a dainty boy,
Who had a cheek as red as any cherry,
Sweet baby, was his mother's only joy,
And made her heavy heart full often merry:
  Who, though he were God's Son, yet like a stranger,
  He in a stable born was, in a manger.

And poor, God knows he was (my child), not fine,
Or like a gentleman in gay attire:
But simple clothes he had, which was a sign
How little to be proud he did desire:
  Yet if he would have sought for worldly grace,
  He might have gone in silk, and golden lace.

I. F. (1613).

The Star in the East

TO see their King, the kingly sophies come;
And them to guide unto his Master's home,
A star comes dancing up the orient,
That springs for joy over the strawy tent,
Where gold, to make their Prince a crown, they all present.

GILES FLETCHER.

The Three Kings

THERE came three kings from Galilee
Into Bethlehem, that fair citie,
To seek to him that e'er should be
By right-a
Lord and king and knight-a.

As they came forth with their offering,
They met with Herod that moody king;
He askëd them of their coming
This tide-a,
And this to them he said-a:

'Of whence be ye, you kingës three?'
'Of the east, as you may see,
To seek him that should ever be
By right-a
Lord and king and knight-a.'

'When you at this child have been,
Come you home this way again;
Tell me the sight that you have seen,
I pray-a,
Go you none other way-a.'

They took their leave both old and ying
Then of Herod that moody king;
They went forth with their offering
By light-a
Of the star that shone so bright-a.

Till they came into the place
Where Jesu and his mother was;
Offered they up with great solàce
In fere-a
Gold, incense, and myrrh-a. . . .

Anon, as on their way they went,
The Father of heaven an angel sent
To these three kings that made presènt
This tide-a,
And this to them he said-a:

'My Lord hath warned you every one
By Herod king you go not home,
For an you do he will you slone
And 'stroy-a,
And hurt you wonderly-a.'

So forth they went another way
Through the might of God his lay,

In fere] In company. slone] slay.

As the angel to them did say,
Full right-a;
It was a good fair sight-a.

When they came home to their countrie,
Glad and blithe they were all three
Of the sight that they had see;
By dene-a
The company was clean-a.

OLD CAROL.

Herod's Suspicions

WHY art thou troubled, Herod? what vain fear
Thy blood-revolving breast to rage doth move?
Heaven's King, who doffs himself weak flesh to wear,
Comes not to rule in wrath, but serve in love;
Nor would he this thy feared crown from thee tear,
But give thee a better with himself above.
Poor jealousy! why should he wish to prey
Upon thy crown, who gives his own away?

Make to thy reason, man, and mock thy doubts;
Look how below thy fears their causes are;
Thou art a soldier, Herod; send thy scouts,
See how he 's furnished for so feared a war.
What armour does he wear? a few thin clouts.
His trumpets? tender cries. His men, to dare
So much? rude shepherds. What his steeds? alas,
Poor beasts! a slow ox and a simple ass.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

By dene] at once, or all together.

'Arise . . . and flee into Egypt'

BE still, my blessëd babe,
Though cause thou hast to mourn,
Whose blood most innocent to shed,
The cruel king hath sworn;
And lo! alas! behold
What slaughter he doth make,
Shedding the blood of infants all,
Sweet Saviour, for thy sake.
A King is born, they say,
Which King this king would kill:
Oh! woe, and woeful heavy day
When wretches have their will! . . .

Lo, lo! my little babe,
Be still, lament no more;
From fury thou shalt step aside,
Help have we still in store:
We heavenly warning have,
Some other soil to seek;
From death must fly the Lord of life,
As lamb both mild and meek:
Thus must my babe obey
The king that would him kill:
Oh! woe, and woeful heavy day
When wretches have their will!

ANON. (W. Byrd's *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs.* 1588).

The Slaughter of the Innocents

'Then Herod . . . slew all the children'

AND yet but newly he was infanted,
And yet already he was sought to die;
Yet scarcely born, already banishëd,
Not able yet to go, and forced to fly:
But scarcely fled away, when, by and by,
The tyrant's sword with blood is all defiled,
And Rachel, for her sons, with fury wild
Cries, 'O thou cruel king!' and, 'O my sweetest child!'

GILES FLETCHER

A Song of the Mothers

LULLY, lullay, thou little tiny child,
By by, lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,
By by, lully, lullay!

O sisters two,
How may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling,
For whom we do sing
By by, lully, lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
Chargëd he hath this day
His men of might
In his own sight
All young children to slay:

That woe is me,
Poor child, for thee,
And ever mourn, and may,
For thy parting,
Neither say nor sing
By by, lully, lullay.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY

It was in Fair Bethlehem

IT was in fair Bethlehem,
Where Love first lay,
That in the street on merry feet,
He heard the children play.
And all the running sound was sweet,
And plain as plain could be:
'Jesus, suffer little feet
To come to thee!'

It was in fair Bethlehem,
They came a merry crowd,
They stopped before the stable door
And knocked thereon aloud:
'Oh, open, open!' cried they then,
'As wide as wide can be!
Heart of Jesus, suffer us
To come to thee.'

It was in fair Bethlehem,
That Love spake low:
'Oh, come to-night!' he called to them,
'And I will not say no!'

'To-night, to-night!' they all entreat,
'As soon as soon may be!
Jesus, suffer little feet
To come to thee!'

It was in fair Bethlehem,
That night the children died:
They came to play where Jesus lay,
And Mary's arms were wide.
'Oh, open, open!' cried they then,
'As wide as wide can be!
Heart of childhood, suffer us
To come to thee!'

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

The Innocents

PEACE, pretty Innocents, forbear to cry,
Receive with willing sides the fatal blow;
Best is that death which comes in infancy,
The longer life is but prolongëd woe.
Who yesterday was born and dies to-day,
Comes to his port as soon as sets to sea.

Your journey's end at setting forth you met,
Your whole day's task you in the morning finished;
Your sun no sooner did arise, but set,
Yet was your day increased, your night diminished.
You oped your eyes, and seeing naught but pain
In this base world, you closed them up again.

Death, to be prized 'bove any life's best rate,
Save that best life which doth such death ensue!
Your Saviour's kindness you anticipate,
Dying for him, ere he do die for you:
How soon are you of martyrs' crowns possessors,
Who martyrs were ere you could be confessors.

CHARLES FITZGEFFRY.

On the Road into Egypt

THERE was a star in the west land,
So bright did it appear
Into King Herod's chamber,
And where King Herod were.

The wise men soon espied it,
And told the king on high,
A princely babe was born that night
No king could e'er destroy. . . .

'Rise up, rise up, you merry men all,
See that you ready be,
All children under two years old
Now slain they all shall be.'

Then Jesus, ah! and Joseph,
And Mary that was so pure,
They travelled into Egypt,
As you shall find it sure.

And when they came to Egypt's land,
  Amongst those fierce wild beasts,
Mary, she being weary,
  Must needs sit down to rest.

'Come sit thee down,' says Jesus,
  'Come sit thee down by me,
And thou shalt see how these wild beasts
  Do come and worship me.'

First came the lovely lion,
  Which Jesu's grace did spring,
And of the wild beasts in the field,
  The lion shall be the king. . . .

Then Jesus, ah! and Joseph,
  And Mary that was unknown,
They travelled by a husbandman
  Just while his seed was sown.

'God speed thee, man!' said Jesus,
  'Go fetch thy ox and wain,
And carry home thy corn again,
  Which thou this day hast sown.'

The husbandman fell on his knees,
  Even before his face;
'Long time hast thou been lookëd for,
  But now thou art come at last.' . . .

'If any one should come this way,
  And inquire for me alone,
Tell them that Jesus passëd by,
  As thou thy seed did sow.'

After that there came King Herod.
With his train so furiously,
Inquiring of the husbandman,
Whether Jesus passëd by.

'Why, the truth it must be spoke,
And the truth it must be known,
For Jesus passëd by this way
When my seed was sown.

'But now I have it reapen,
And some laid on my wain,
Ready to fetch and carry
Into my barn again.'

'Turn back,' says the captain,
'Your labour and mine's in vain,
It's full three-quarters of a year
Since he his seed has sown.'

So Herod was deceivëd
By the work of God's own hand,
And further he proceeded
Into the Holy Land.

OLD CAROL.

The Path

SEE'ST thou that private path, which ever since
With lilies and with violets hath smiled,
Sweetly acknowledging the influence
Both of the passing mother and the child?
The country wondered at the beauteous list,
But from whose feet it sprung, they little wist.

list] line, track.

As to the sea the silver river through
A thousand by-paths steals its secret way,
So doth this flowery track to Egypt flow,
Declining all things that its course might stay.
Doubt not the windings, but securely ride,
For now the way itself's thy fragrant guide.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

In Egypt

COCKADOODLEDOO!
Our Lady's lost her shoe,
Saint Joseph's lost his lantern,
What will they do?
The child will be both shoes and staff
And a lantern too.
In the dark night he'll be their light
And their guide so true.

Cockadoodledoo!
They that slept for sorrow
Wake on a glad morrow,
Their goal won,
Their travel done,
Their trouble through.
How cunning is his little laugh,
His eyes how blue!
Cockadoodledoo!
The sun is high in Egypt's sky,
Cockadoodledoo!

RICHARD LAWSON GALES.

AT NAZARETH

The Return from Egypt

WHEN death and hell their right in Herod claim,
Christ from exile returns to native soil,
There with his life more deeply death to maim,
Than death did life by all the infants' spoil.
He showed the parents that the babes did moan,
That all their lives were less than his alone.

But hearing Herod's son to have the crown,—
The impious offspring of a bloody sire,—
To Nazareth (of heaven belovëd) town,
Flower to a flower,[1] he fitly doth retire;
For he is a flower, and in a flower he bred,
And from a throne now to a flower he fled.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

The Child Jesus

HAIL, blessëd Virgin, full of heavenly grace,
Blest above all that sprang from human race;
Whose heaven-saluted womb brought forth in one
A blessëd Saviour, and a blessëd son:
O! what a ravishment 't had been to see
Thy little Saviour perking on thy knee!
To see him nuzzle in thy virgin breast!
His milk-white body all unclad, undrest;

[1] Nazareth was formerly supposed to mean a flower.

To see thy busy fingers clothe and wrap
His spradling limbs in thy indulgent lap!
To see his desperate eyes, with childish grace,
Smiling upon his smiling mother's face!
And, when his forward strength began to bloom,
To see him diddle up and down the room!
O, who would think so sweet a babe as this
Should e'er be slain by a false-hearted kiss!

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'Out of the mouth of babes'

LITTLE Jesus, wast thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of heaven, and just like me?
Didst thou sometimes think of *there*,
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me—
Not an angel there to dress me!

Hadst thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst thou play in heaven with all
The angels, that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?

Didst thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst thou join thy hands, this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to thee?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did thy mother at the night
Kiss thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And thou know'st I cannot pray
To thee in my father's way—
When thou wast so little, say,
Couldst thou talk thy Father's way?—
So, a little child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, thou art so fair),
And say: 'O Father, I, thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one.'

And he will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since thou wast young!

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

The Boy Jesus

ONCE, measuring his height, he stood
Beneath a cypress tree,
And, leaning back against the wood,
Stretched wide his arms for me;
Whereat a brooding mother-dove
Fled fluttering from her nest above.

At evening he loved to walk
Among the shadowy hills, and talk
Of Bethlehem;
But if perchance there passed us by
The paschal lambs, he'd look at them
In silence, long and tenderly;
And when again he'd try to speak,
I've seen the tears upon his cheek.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

The Holy Well

AS it fell out one May morning,
And upon one bright holiday,
Sweet Jesus asked of his dear mother,
If he might go to play.

'To play, to play, sweet Jesus shall go,
And to play pray get you gone;
And let me hear of no complaint
At night when you come home.'

Sweet Jesus went down to yonder town,
As far as the Holy Well,
And there did see as fine children
As any tongue can tell.

He said, 'God bless you every one,
And your bodies Christ save and see:
Little children, shall I play with you,
And you shall play with me?'

But they made answer to him, 'No:
They were lords and ladies all;
And he was but a maiden's child
Born in an ox's stall.'

Sweet Jesus turnëd him around,
And he neither laughed nor smiled,
But the tears came trickling from his eyes
To be but a maiden's child.

Sweet Jesus turnëd him about,
To his mother's dear home went he,
And said, 'I have been in yonder town,
As far as you can see.

'I have been down in yonder town
As far as the Holy Well,
There did I meet as fine children
As any tongue can tell.

'I bid God bless them every one,
And their bodies Christ save and see:
Little children, shall I play with you,
And you shall play with me?

'But they made answer to me, No:
They were lords and ladies all;
And I was but a maiden's child,
Born in an ox's stall.'

'Though you are but a maiden's child,
Born in an ox's stall,
Thou art the Christ, the King of heaven,
And the Saviour of them all.

'Sweet Jesus, go down to yonder town
As far as the Holy Well,
And take away those sinful souls,
And dip them deep in hell.'

'Nay, nay,' sweet Jesus said,
'Nay, nay, that may not be;
For there are too many sinful souls
Crying out for the help of me.'

OLD CAROL.

In the Temple

WITH his kind mother, who partakes thy woe,
Joseph, turn back; see where your child doth sit
Blowing, yea, blowing out those sparks of wit,
Which himself on the doctors did bestow.
The Word but lately could not speak, and lo,
It suddenly speaks wonders. Whence comes it,
That all which was, and all which should be writ,
A shallow-seeming child should deeply know?
His Godhead was not soul to his manhood,
Nor had time mellowed him to this ripenèss:
But as for one which hath a long task, 'tis good
With the sun to begin his business,
He in his age's morning thus began,
By miracles exceeding power of man.

JOHN DONNE.

Jesus Found

MARY:

AH, dear child! dear child! why hast thou thus done?
For thee we have had great sorrow and care;
Thy father and I three days have gone
Wide thee to seek, of bliss full bare.

JESUS:

Why have ye sought me with heavy fare?
Wit ye not well that I must be
Among them that are my Father's ware,
His ghostly cattle for to oversee?

MARY:

Your Father's will must needs be wrought,
It is most worthy that it so be;
Yet on your mother have ye some thought,
And be never more so long from me.
As to my thinking, these days three,
That ye absent have been away,
Be more longer in their degree
Than all the space of twelve year day.

JESUS:

Now, for to please my mother mild,
I shall you follow with obedience;
I am your son and subject child,
And owe to do you high reverence.
Home with you I will go hence:—
Of you, clerkës, my leave I take.
Every child should, with good diligence,
His mother to please, his own will to forsake.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY.

heavy fare] toilsome journey. clerkës] the doctors.

The Carpenter of Nazareth

A CARPENTER of Nazareth
(No more than that?) at home was fain
For eighteen years to spend his breath
In daily work for daily gain.

While yet still young, had Joseph taught
The boy a carpenter to be;
He learnt the craft with years, and wrought
At last more cunningly than he.

Swift to his tools the willing wood
Took shape and form beneath his hand;
Soon was no craftsman there as good
As Mary's son in all the land.

Full many a thing he wrought with skill:
Cradles for poor souls yet to be;
Beds, tables, cups, that men might still
Know joy as well as misery;
And biers for who had had their fill
Of life and all its vanity.

But as he came to know men's need—
Know it in all things, small and great—
He could not rest and take no heed
Of their most pitiful estate.

And, as he worked, yet one thing more
For them he fashioned lovingly,—
Each piece and part long pondered o'er,—
A dream of what perchance might be.

Thus through these long years it would seem
  While working trusty wood, he planned
To build the semblance of his dream—
  Build it of sliding human sand.

He tried——And when (Oh, bitterness!)
  His dream crashed down, and, lonely, he
Stood in its ruins, illusionless,
  Full-faced with man's inconstancy,

'Mid all else shifting, one thing good—
  One thing he saw, true, solid, plain:
A forthright craftsman's work of wood,
  The one thing there not wrought in vain.

The carpenter of Nazareth
  (That only? Nothing more?) was fain
To stretch him on that cross of death
  As one, at last, come home again.

ANON.

HE THAT SHOULD COME

He left his father's trade to roam,
A wandering vagrant without home.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

A humble form the Godhead wore,
The pains of poverty he bore,
  To gaudy pomp unknown;
Though in a human walk he trod,
Still was the man Almighty God
  In glory all his own.

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

IN THE WILDERNESS

The Youth of the Baptist

I THINK he had not heard of the far towns;
Nor of the deeds of men, nor of kings' crowns;
Before the thought of God took hold of him,
As he was sitting dreaming in the calm
Of one first noon, upon the desert's rim,
Beneath the tall fair shadows of the palm,
All overcome with some strange inward balm. . . .

He numbered not the changes of the year,
The days, the nights, and he forgot all fear
Of death: each day he thought there should have been
A shining ladder set for him to climb
Athwart some opening in the heavens, e'en
To God's eternity, and see, sublime,
His face whose shadow passing fills all time.

But he walked through the ancient wilderness.
O, there the prints of feet were numberless
And holy all about him! And quite plain
He saw each spot an angel silvershod
Had lit upon; where Jacob too had lain
The place seemed fresh,—and, bright and lately trod,
A long track showed where Enoch walked with God.

And often, while the sacred darkness trailed
Along the mountains smitten and unveiled
By rending lightnings,—over all the noise
Of thunders and the earth that quaked and bowed
From its foundations—he could hear the voice
Of great Elias prophesying loud
To him whose face was covered by a cloud.

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

The Herald

THE last and greatest herald of heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild:
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distilled;
Parched body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst he forth: 'All ye, whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn.'
Who listened to his voice, obeyed his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their marble caves, 'Repent, repent!'

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

The Baptism

NOW had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptized: to his great baptism flocked
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed
To the flood Jordan, came, as then obscure,
Unmarked, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his heavenly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptized
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From heaven pronounced him his belovëd Son.

JOHN MILTON.

Jordan

THE waves came crowding one upon another
Unto their Lord, their chaste salute to give:
Each one did chide and justle back his brother,
And, with contentious foaming murmur, strive
To kiss its Maker, and more spotless grow
Than from its virgin spring it first did flow.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

'And he was with the wild beasts'

CHRIST of his gentleness
Thirsting and hungering,
Walked in the wilderness;
Soft words of grace he spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bitterns call
From ruined palace-wall,
Answered them brotherly.
He held communion
With the she-pelican
Of lonely piety.
Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to his homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbëd stings,
With eager dragon-eyes;
Great rats on leather wings
And poor blind broken things,
Foul in their miseries.
And ever with him went,
Of all his wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs—poor innocent—
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scapegoat;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

ROBERT GRAVES.

The Temptation

THE fall of Adam, by frail Eve enticed,
Was his own death, ours, and the death of Christ. . . .
Moreover, in the sacred text 'tis read,
'The woman's seed shall break the serpent's head'.
It is observed, the devil had decreed
To tempt our Saviour, the predicted seed,
In the same sort, though not the same success,
As he did Eve our first progenitress.
All sins (saith John) we may in three divide—
Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride.
She sees the tree, and thought it good for meat,
The flesh's lust persuaded her to eat;
She sees it fair and pleasant to the eye,
Then the eye's lust inciteth her to try;
She apprehends that it will make her wise,
So through the pride of heart she eats and dies.
And when he Christ into the desert led,
Being hungry, 'Turn', said he, 'these stones to bread;'
There 's fleshly lust's temptation. Thence he grows
To the eye's lust, and from the mountain shows
The world, with all the pomp contained therein,
Saying, 'All this great purchase thou shalt win
But to fall down and worship me.' And when
He saw these fail, to tempt him once again,
Using the pride of heart, when from on high
He bade him leap down, and make proof to fly.
And as the woman yielding to temptation,
Made thereby forfeit of all man's salvation,

And so the devil, who did the serpent use,
Was said by that the woman's head to bruise:
So Christ, the woman's seed, making resist
To these seducements of that panurgist,
Because by neither pride nor lust misled,
Was truly said to break the serpent's head.

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

'Man shall not live by bread alone'

WHERE flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head—
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition nature yields;
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart:
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

panurgist] rascal.

'And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him'

SO Satan fell. And straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
Then in a flowery valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine,
Ambrosial fruits fetched from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired
What hunger, if aught hunger had impaired,
Or thirst; and, as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the tempter proud. . . .
'Hail, Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.'

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor; and from heavenly feast refreshed
Brought on his way with joy; he unobserved
Home to his mother's house private returned.

JOHN MILTON.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

'Rabbi, . . . where dwellest thou?'

WHAT happy, secret fountain,
Fair shade, or mountain,
Whose undiscovered virgin glory
Boasts it this day, though not in story,
Was then thy dwelling? did some cloud,
Fixed to a tent, descend and shroud
My distrest Lord? or did a star,
Beckoned by thee, though high and far,
In sparkling smiles haste gladly down
To lodge light, and increase her own?
My dear, dear God! I do not know
What lodged thee then, nor where, nor how;
But I am sure thou dost now come
Oft to a narrow, homely room,
Where thou too hast but the least part,
My God, I mean my sinful heart.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

The Water made Wine

THOU water turn'st to wine, fair friend of life;
Thy foe, to cross the sweet arts of thy reign,
Distils from thence the tears of wrath and strife,
And so turns wine to water back again.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Epithalamium

CHRIST and his mother be the guests to-day,
Never to go away;
Good wine in store;
A full life's drinking, and, when life is past,
The good wine kept till last,
To fail no more.

HENRY IGNATIUS DUDLEY RYDER.

Nicodemus

'The same came to Jesus by night'

THROUGH that pure virgin-shrine,
That sacred veil drawn o'er thy glorious noon,
That men might look and live, as glow-worms shine
And face the moon,
Wise Nicodemus saw such light
As made him know his God by night.

Most blest believer he!
Who in that land of darkness and blind eyes
Thy long expected healing wings could see,
When thou didst rise;
And, what can never more be done,
Did at mid-night speak with the Sun!

O who will tell me, where
He found thee at that dead and silent hour?
What hallowed solitary ground did bear
So rare a flower,
Within whose sacred leaves did lie
The fulness of the Deity?

No mercy-seat of gold,
No dead and dusty cherub, nor carved stone
But his own living works, did my Lord hold
And lodge alone;
Where trees and herbs did watch and peep
And wonder, while the Jews did sleep.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'Ye must be born again'

WHEN the rich learnëd Pharisee
Came to consult him secretly,
Upon his heart with iron pen
He wrote, 'Ye must be born again.'

WILLIAM BLAKE.

'That which is born of the flesh is flesh . . .'

WHEN chill winter's cheer we see
Shrinking, shaking, shivering, cold;
See ourselves: for such are we
After youth, if ever old.
After winter, spring, in order,
Comes again: but, Earthly Thing,
Rotting here, not rooting further,
Can thy winter hope a spring?

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . .'

THOUGH that your sins be never so great,
For them be sad and ask mercy;
Soon of my Father grace ye may get
With the least tear weeping out of your eye.
My Father me sent, thee, man, to buy,
All thy ransom myself must pay;
For love of thee myself will die;
If thou ask mercy, I say never nay.

Into the earth from heaven above,
Thy sorrow to cease and joy to restore,
Man, I came down, all for thy love—
Love me again, I ask no more.
Though thou mishap and sin full sore,
Yet turn again and mercy crave;
It is thy fault an thou be lore,
Ask thou mercy and thou shalt have.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY.

The Woman of Samaria

BESIDE a wellë Jesus, God and man,
Spake in reproof of the Samaritan:
'Thou hast y-had five housbondës,' quoth he,
'And thilkë man, the which that hath now thee,
Is not thine housbond;' thus said he certain;
What that he meant thereby, I cannot seyn;
But that I ask, why that the fifthë man
Was no housbond to the Samaritan?

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

an] if. . lore] lost. seyn] say. thilkë] this.

The Call of the Four

'Follow me'

PETER and Andrew, James and John, whom first
The Lord elected to be great on earth,
From men with men in rank of men the worst,
The meanest in degree, of basest birth,
When they were called God's glory for to see,
The only words he used, were 'Follow me.' . . .

Which 'Follow me' must not be understood
In fasts of miracle or earthly pleasure,
Nor striving, as he did, in sweating blood,
To know no sin; but to attain the treasure
Of never-fading joys of true salvation,
By holding worldly pomp in detestation.

For he who follows Christ must not respect
Promotion, money, glory, ease, delight;
But poverty, reproof, and self-neglect,
Disgrace, tears, hunger, cold, thirst, scorn, despite;
Friends, father, mother, brethren, children, wife,
Must be forgone, yea, lands and goods and life.

I. F. (1613).

Peter

THOU hast the art on 't, Peter, and canst tell
To cast thy nets on all occasions well:
When Christ calls, and thy nets would have thee stay,
To cast them well 's to cast them quite away.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'They forsook all, and followed him'

WE by no shining Galilean lake
Have toiled, but long and little fruitfully
In waves of a more old and bitter sea
Our nets we cast; large winds, that sleep and wake
Around the feet of dawn and sunset, make
Our spiritual inhuman company,
And formless shadows of water rise and flee
All night around us till the morning break.

Thus our lives wear—shall it be ever thus?
Some idle day, when least we look for grace,
Shall we see stand upon the shore indeed
The visible Master, and the Lord of us,
And leave our nets, nor question of his creed,
Following the Christ within a young man's face?

EDWARD DOWDEN.

'He . . . departed into a solitary place, and there prayed'

EARLY, while yet the dark was gay
And gilt with stars, more trim than day,
Heaven's lily, and the earth's chaste rose,
The green immortal branch, arose,
And in a solitary place
Bowed to his Father his blest face.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

Matthew

MATTHEW by Christ called from the custom board,
Disputes not whom he follows, what he leaves:
So like a loadstone draws his powerful word
That seeming just rejects, sinners receives.

HENRY CLIFFORD, EARL OF CUMBERLAND.

'*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners . . .*'

'HE is a sinner,' you are pleased to say.
Then love him for the sake of Christ, I pray.
If on his gracious words you place your trust,—
'I came to call the sinners, not the just,'—
Second his call; which if you will not do,
You'll be the greater sinner of the two.

JOHN BYROM.

The Pool of Bethesda

WHEN the poor cripple by the pool did lie,
Full many years in misery and pain,
No sooner he on Christ had set his eye
But he was well, and comfort came again.

ANON. (J. Dowland's *A Pilgrim's Solace*, 1612).

'My Father worketh . . . and I work'

AH, little recks the labourer
How near his work is holding him to God,
The loving Labourer through space and time.

After all not to create only, or found only,
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free,
To fill the gross the torpid bulk with vital religious fire,
Not to repel or destroy so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate,
To obey as well as command, to follow more than to lead,
These also are the lessons of our New World;
While how little the New after all, how much the Old,
Old World!

Long and long has the grass been growing,
Long and long has the rain been falling,
Long has the globe been rolling round.

WALT WHITMAN.

On the Disciples plucking Corn

TIME was, when Christ with his disciples went
Through cornfields on the sabbath, hunger-spent
They plucked the ears and ate, and were content.

That time—when hungry mouths could thus be fed,
And 'Ye are thieves, that corn is mine!' ne'er said;
That open-handed time—that time is dead.

Time was, when such a sight could much displease
Religion's formalists, the Pharisees,
Who cried, 'They break the sabbath's sanctities.'

That time—when starving souls were thought well fed
On forms and rites instead of living bread;
That narrow-hearted time—is that time dead?

ANON.

'*And he appointed twelve*'

NOT chance, but choice, did first apostles make;
Christ did not them at all adventures take:
But as his heavenly wisdom thought most fit
For his own purpose, so he ordered it.
He raisëd not an army for to fight
And force religion, but did men invite
By gentle means. Twelve of the simpler sort
Served to make up his train, and kept his court.

THOMAS WASHBOURNE.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

To love our God with all our strength and will;
To covet nothing; to devise no ill
Against our neighbours; to procure or do
Nothing to others which we would not to
Our very selves; not to revenge our wrong;
To be content with little; not to long
For wealth and greatness; to despise or jeer
No man, and, if we be despised, to bear;
To feed the hungry; to hold fast our crown;
To take from others nought; to give our own,—
These are his precepts, and, alas, in these
What is so hard but faith can do with ease?

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE BEATITUDES

'Blessed are the poor in spirit . . .'

HE that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide.
I am content with what I have,
Little be it, or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.

JOHN BUNYAN.

'Blessed are they that mourn . . .'

CAN I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can he, who smiles on all,
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear,

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast;
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear;

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
Oh, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all;
He becomes an infant small;
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

O! he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy;
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

WILLIAM BLAKE

'Blessed are the meek . . .'

O HOLY Jesus who didst for us die,
And on the altar bleeding lie,
Bearing all torment, pain, reproach and shame,
That we by virtue of the same,

Though enemies to God, might be
Redeemed, and set at liberty.
As thou didst us forgive,
So meekly let us love to others show,
And live in heaven on earth below.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness . . .'

ADVERSE and prosperous fortunes both work on
Here, for the righteous man's salvation:
Be he opposed, or be he not withstood,
All serve to th'augmentation of his good.

ROBERT HERRICK.

'Blessed are the merciful . . .'

WHY, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And he that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If he, which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? O! think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

'Blessed are the pure in heart . . .'

TELL them, though 'tis an awful thing to die,
('Twas e'en to thee) yet the dread path once trod,
Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,
And bids the pure in heart behold their God.

THOMAS GRAY.

'Blessed are the peacemakers . . .'

WERE all the world a paradise of ease
'Twere easy then to live in peace.
Were all men wise, divine, and innocent,
Just, holy, peaceful, and content,
Kind, loving, true, and always good,
As in the golden age they stood;
'Twere easy then to live
In all delight and glory, full of love,
Blest as the angels are above.

But we such principles must now attain
(If we true blessedness would gain)
As those are, which will help to make us reign
Over disorders, injuries,
Ingratitudes, calamities,
Affronts, oppressions, slanders, wrongs,
Lies, angers, bitter tongues,
The reach of malice must surmount, and quell
The very rage and power of hell.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted . . .'

SERVANT of God, well done, well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence: for this was all thy care
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse.

JOHN MILTON.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

'Ye are the light of the world'

STARS are of mighty use: the night
Is dark, and long;
The road foul, and where one goes right,
Six may go wrong.
One twinkling ray,
Shot o'er some cloud,
May clear much way,
And guide a crowd.

God's saints are shining lights: who stays
Here long must pass
O'er dark hills, swift streams, and steep ways
As smooth as glass;
But these all night,
Like candles, shed
Their beams, and light
Us into bed.

They are indeed our pillar-fires,
Seen as we go;
They are that city's shining spires
We travel to.
A swordlike gleam
Kept man for sin
First out; this beam
Will guide him in.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

'Let your light so shine . . .'

WHY dost thou lurk so close? is it for fear
Some busy eye should pry into thy flame,
And spy a thief, or else some blemish there?
Or being spied, shrink'st thou thy head for shame?
Come, come, fond taper, shine but clear,
Thou need'st not shrink for shame, nor shroud for fear.

Remember, O remember, thou wert set
For men to see the great Creator by;
Thy flame is not thine own: it is a debt
Thou ow'st thy Master. And wilt thou deny
To pay the interest of thy light?
And skulk in corners, and play least in sight?

FRANCIS QUARLES.

THE OLD LAW AND THE NEW

'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil'

THE Master stood upon the mount, and taught.
He saw a fire in his disciples' eyes.
'The old law', they said, 'is wholly come to nought!
Behold the new world rise!'

'Was it', the Lord then said, 'with scorn ye saw
The old law observed by Scribes and Pharisees?
I say unto you, see ye keep that law
More faithfully than these!

fond] foolish.

'Too hasty heads for ordering worlds, alas!
Think not that I to annul the law have willed;
No jot, no tittle from the law shall pass,
Till all hath been fulfilled.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

'First be reconciled to thy brother'

IF thou intend to turn thy fearful face
To God above, make thine agreement yet
First with thy brother whom thou didst abuse,
Confess thy faults, thy frowardness and all,
So that the Lord thy prayër not refuse.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE.

'But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh . . .'

THINK, and be careful what thou art within;
For there is sin in the desire of sin.
Think, and be thankful, in a different case;
For there is grace in the desire of grace.

JOHN BYROM.

'Swear not at all'

TAKE not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain;
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain;
But the cheap swearer through his open sluice
Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing:
Were I an epicure, I could bate swearing.

GEORGE HERBERT.

'Resist not evil'

I WRESTLE not with rage
While fury's flame doth burn;
It is in vain to stop the stream
Until the tide do turn.

But when the flame is out,
And ebbing wrath doth end,
I turn a late enragëd foe
Into a quiet friend.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

'Love your enemies'

WHAT better friendship than to cover shame?
What greater love than for a friend to die?
Yet this is better, to asself the blame;
And this is greater, for an enemy.

GILES FLETCHER.

'Be ye therefore perfect . . .'

YOU bid us to be perfect, Lord, and we
Continue still imperfect, as you see;
What should we say, O Lord, but only this,
Give what you bid, and bid us what you please.

RICHARD FLECKNOE.

asself the blame] blame oneself.

The Same

IT is not growing like a tree
In bulk doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere;
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

BEN JONSON.

ALMS

'Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them'

AND if the glory and esteem I have,
Be nothing else than what my silver gave;
If for no other ground
I am with love or praises crowned,
'Tis such a shame, such vile, such base repute,
'Tis better starve, than eat such empty fruit.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

'When thou doest alms'

THE superabundance of my store,
That is the portion of the poor:
Wheat, barley, rye, or oats; what is 't
But he takes toll of? all the grist.

Two raiments have I: Christ then makes
This law; that he and I part stakes.
Or have I two loaves; then I use
The poor to cut, and I to choose.

ROBERT HERRICK.

'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth'

THE hen so soon as she an egg doth lay
Spreads the fame of her doing what she may:
About the yard a-cackling she doth go
To tell what 'twas she at her nest did do.

Just thus it is with some professing men,
If they do aught that 's good; they, like our hen,
Cannot but cackle on 't where'er they go,
And what their right hand doth, their left must know.

JOHN BUNYAN.

'Give to him that asketh thee'

GIVE all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

PRAYER

'When thou prayest'

FAREWELL, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

'That they may be seen of men'

WHO judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws? . . .
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)
No—the man's morals were exact. What then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride, and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them, as fine trappings, for a show,—
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

WILLIAM COWPER.

'Pray to thy Father'

MORE things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

'Use not vain repetitions'

THOU bidd'st us pray: and we do pray to thee,
But as to power and God without us placed,
Thinking a wish may wear out vanity,
Or habits be by miracles defaced.

FULKE GREVILLE, LORD BROOKE.

'Much speaking'

IN all our prayers, th' Almighty does regard
The judgement of the balance, not the yard:
He loves not words, but matter; 'tis his pleasure
To buy his wares by weight, and not by measure.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'Your Father knoweth . . .'

BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

'After this manner therefore pray ye'

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,
In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,
To all men be thy name known, which is love,
Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.

Perfect thy kingdom in our passing state,
That here on earth thou may'st as well approve
Our service, as thou ownest theirs above,
Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin,
Even as our anger soon is past and dead
Be thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
By thee in paths of peace thy sheep be led,
And in the vale of terror comforted.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

'Forgive us our sins'

FAIN would I say, 'Forgive my foul offence!'
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran?

ROBERT BURNS.

FASTING

'When ye fast'

WHOSO will pray, he must fast and be clean,
And fat his soul and make his body lean.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

'Appear not unto men to fast'

IS this a fast, to keep
The larder lean?
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look and sour?

No: 'tis a fast, to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate,
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

ROBERT HERRICK.

TREASURE

'Treasures upon earth'

AS withereth the primrose by the river,
As fadeth summer's sun from gliding fountains,
As vanisheth the light-blown bubble ever,
As melteth snow upon the mossy mountains:
So melts, so vanisheth, so fades, so withers
The rose, the shine, the bubble, and the snow
Of praise, pomp, glory, joy—which short life gathers—
Fair praise, vain pomp, sweet glory, brittle joy.
The withered primrose by the mourning river,
The faded summer's sun from weeping fountains,
The light-blown bubble vanishëd for ever,
The molten snow upon the naked mountains,
Are emblems that the treasures we up-lay
Soon wither, vanish, fade, and melt away.

EDMUND BOLTON.

'Treasures in heaven'

SWEET are the thoughts that harbour full content,
Delightful be the joys that know no care;
Such, those sweet thoughts that on heaven's joys are bent,
And on celestial bliss still thinking are:
These joys delight, these thoughts content, do send;
All earthly thoughts and joys in sorrow end.

ANON. (J. Amner's *Sacred Hymns*, 1615).

'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'

BECAUSE a man has shop to mind
In time and place, since flesh must live,
Needs spirit lack all life behind,
All stray thoughts, fancies fugitive,
All loves except what trade can give?

I want to know a butcher paints,
A baker rhymes for his pursuit,
Candlestick-maker much acquaints
His soul with song, or, haply mute,
Blows out his brains upon the flute.

But—shop each day and all day long!
Friend, your good angel slept, your star
Suffered eclipse, fate did you wrong!
From where these sorts of treasures are,
There should our hearts be—Christ, how far!

ROBERT BROWNING.

'Ye cannot serve God and mammon'

GOD will have all, or none; serve him, or fall
Down before Baal, Bel, or Belial:
Either be hot, or cold: God doth despise,
Abhor, and spew out all neutralities.

ROBERT HERRICK.

TREASURE

'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?'

POOR soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Foiled by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there 's no more dying then.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

PROVIDENCE

'Behold the fowls of the air . . .'

HITHER thou com'st; the busy wind all night
Blew through thy lodging, where thy own warm wing
Thy pillow was. Many a sullen storm,—
For which coarse man seems much the fitter born,—
Rained on thy bed
And harmless head.
And now, as fresh and cheerful as the light,
Thy little heart in early hymns doth sing
Unto that Providence, whose unseen arm
Curbed them, and clothed thee well and warm.

HENRY VAUGHAN

'Consider the lilies . . .'

BEHOLD, O man, that toilsome pains dost take,
The flowers, the fields, and all that pleasant grows,
How they themselves do thine ensample make,
Whiles nothing-envious nature them forth throws
Out of her fruitful lap; how, no man knows,
They spring, they bud, they blossom fresh and fair,
And deck the world with their rich pompous shows;
Yet no man for them taketh pains or care,
Yet no man to them can his careful pains compare.

The lily, lady of the flowering field,
The flower-de-luce, her lovely paramour,
Bid thee to them thy fruitless labours yield,
And soon leave off this toilsome weary stour:
Lo! lo, how brave she decks her bounteous bower,
With silken curtains and gold coverlets,
Therein to shroud her sumptuous belamour,
Yet neither spins nor cards, nor cares nor frets,
But to her mother nature all her care she lets.

EDMUND SPENSER.

stour] trouble.

'Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'

WHEN the great Hebrew king did almost strain
The wondrous treasures of his wealth and brain,
His royal southern guest to entertain;
Though she on silver floors did tread,
With bright Assyrian carpets on them spread,
To hide the metal's poverty;
Though she looked up to roofs of gold,
And nought around her could behold
But silk and rich embroidery,
And Babylonian tapestry,
And wealthy Hiram's princely dye;
Though Ophir's starry stones met everywhere her eye;
Though she herself, and her gay host were drest
With all the shining glories of the East;
When lavish art her costly work had done,
The honour and the prize of bravery
Was by the garden from the palace won;
And every rose and lily there did stand
Better attired by nature's hand.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

'The grass of the field, which to-day is . . .'

AH! see, who so fair thing dost fain to see,
In springing flower the image of thy day!
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty,

That fairer seems, the less ye see her may!
Lo! see soon after, how more bold and free
Her barëd bosom she doth broad display!
Lo! see soon after, how she fades and falls away!

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life, the leaf, the bud, the flower.

EDMUND SPENSER.

'For all these things do the nations of the world seek after'

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathëd horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

'All these things shall be added unto you'

PLEASURE it is
To hear, y-wis,
The birdës sing;
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing;
God's pùrveyance
For sustenance
It is for man;
Then we always
To him give praise,
And thank him than,
And thank him than.

WILLIAM CORNISH.

'Ask . . . seek . . . knock . . .'

STRONG is the horse upon his speed;
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,
Which makes at once his game:
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;
Strong through the turbulent profound
Shoots xiphias to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal
His eyeball,—like a bastion's mole
His chest against the foes:
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail;
Strong against tide th' enormous whale
Emerges as he goes.

than] then. glede] kite. xiphias] sword-fish.

But stronger still, in earth and air,
And in the sea, the man of prayer,
And far beneath the tide:
And in the seat to faith assigned,
Where ask is have, where seek is find,
Where knock is open wide.

CHRISTOPHER SMART.

'How much more shall your Father . . . give good things'

ASK'ST thou for bread? A stone God will not give,
But bread of life, whereby thy soul shall live;
Or if heaven gives a stone 'tis a precious one—
'Tis Christ the rock of hope, the corner stone.

JOHN HODDESDON.

THE STRAIT GATE

The Broad and the Narrow Ways

O SEE ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi' thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

And see ye not yon broad, broad road,
That lies across the lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

OLD BALLAD.

leven] lawn (?).

The Wayfarers

I HEAR, I see, all the long day
The noise and pomp of the 'broad way';
I note their coarse and proud approaches,
Their silks, perfumes, and glittering coaches.
But in the 'narrow way' to thee
I òbserve only poverty,
And dèspised things; and all along
The ragged, mean and humble throng
Are still on foot, and as they go
They sigh, and say, their Lord went so!

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'That leadeth to destruction'

PREPOSTEROUS fool, thou stroll'st amiss;
Thou err'st; that's not the way, 'tis this:
Thy hopes, instructed by thine eye,
Make thee appear more near than I;
My floor is not so flat, so fine,
And has more obvious rubs than thine.
'Tis true; my way is hard and strait,
And leads me through a thorny gate,
Whose rankling pricks are sharp and fell:
The common way to heaven 's by hell.
'Tis true; thy path is short and fair,
And free from rubs. Ah! fool, beware,
The safest road 's not always even;
The way to hell 's a seeming heaven . . .

Think'st thou, that mirth, and vain delights,
High feed, and shadow-shortening nights,
Soft knees, full bags, and beds of down,
Are proper prologues to a crown?
Or canst thou hope to come and view,
Like prosperous Caesar, and subdue? . . .
The pleasing way is not the right:
He that would conquer heaven must fight.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'Judge not'

A LEAF may hide the largest star
From love's uplifted eye;
A mote of prejudice out-bar
A world of charity.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

'Do men gather grapes of thorns?'

THE thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted: they have torn me, and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such
a seed.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

'By their fruits ye shall know them'

LIKE as the gentle heart itself bewrays
In doing gentle deeds with frank delight,
Even so the baser mind itself displays
In cankered malice and revengeful spite.

ANON. (R. Carlton's *Madrigals*, 1601).

'Not every one that saith . . . Lord, Lord . . .'

NOT every one that with his lips doth pray,
Or praise thy name, is grateful in thy sight;
Thy searching eyes have not so much delight
In those that cry, Lord, Lord, each hour of day,
But such as in thy bounds obedient stay,
And make thy will a law unto their mind,
That in thy promises do comfort find,
And follow not the world's deceitful way.

HENRY LOK.

The Wise and the Foolish Man

LIKE one that builds his house upon the sand,
When rain, and storms, and tempests on it beat,
Foundation being weak, it cannot stand,
But down it falls, the fall thereof is great;
So 's he that hears the Word, and thereof talketh,
Yet as the same commands him, never walketh.

But he that hears, learns, and thereafter lives,
Is like a man that builds upon a rock:
Let storms and tempests rage, it never gives,
But still unmoved abides the hardest shock.
Wise builders, thus, from foolish we discern;
And doers, from those that do nought but learn.

SIR JOHN STRADLING.

'Every one that heareth these words of mine . . .'

LET ignorance a little while now muse
On what is said, and let him not refuse
Good counsel to embrace, lest he remain
Still ignorant of what 's the chiefest gain.
God saith, those that no understanding have,
Although he made them, them he will not save.

JOHN BUNYAN.

IN GALILEE

'My name is Legion'

He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free;
If any be but weak, how strong is he!
To dead men life he is, to sick men health,
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth—
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

GILES FLETCHER.

IN GALILEE

The Centurion

'I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof'

THY God was making haste into thy roof,
Thy humble faith and fear keeps him aloof:
He 'll be thy guest, because he may not be;
He 'll come—into thy house? No, into thee.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

The Widow of Nain

CHRIST said 'Weep not,' but still she went on weeping.
The mother thus,—how will the son obey?
'Young man, arise;' lo! from the bier up-leaping,
The dead proved quicker than the quick that day.

ANON.

'The Son of man came eating and drinking'

HE loved not sloth—unprofitable rest—
Which eats and feeds, and only feeds and eats:
Excess of feeding he hath not professed,
To surfeit in variety of meats:
His diet was not change, or choice: his dish—
Sometimes a barley loaf, sometimes a fish.

I. F. (1613).

'And they say, Behold, a man gluttonous . . .'

WHY should I think to be
From calumny or slander free,
When I see men afford
No better language to my Lord?
My Lord, though free from sin,
Free from detraction hath not been:
If to a feast he come,
He is a glutton called by some;
If wine he drink, O then they cry
He is a drunkard presently;
If he converse with common people, then
He 's friend to publicans and sinful men.

THOMAS WASHBOURNE.

In the Pharisee's House

'Behold, a woman in the city, . . . a sinner'

'WHY wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
Nay, be thou all a rose,—wreath, lips, and cheek.
Nay, not this house,—that banquet-house we seek;
See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.
This delicate day of love we two will share
Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
What, sweet one,—hold'st thou still the foolish freak?
Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair.'

'Oh loose me! See'st thou not my Bridegroom's face
That draws me to him? For his feet my kiss,
My hair, my tears he craves to-day:—and oh!
What words can tell what other day and place
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of his?
He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go!'

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

'*And stood at his feet . . . . weeping*'

THESE eyes, dear Lord, once brandons of desire,
Frail scouts betraying what they had to keep,
Which their own heart, then others set on fire,
Their traitorous black before thee here out-weep:
These locks, of blushing deeds the fair attire,
Smooth-frizzled waves, sad shelves which shadow deep,
Soul-stinging serpents in gilt curls which creep,
To touch thy sacred feet do now aspire.
In seas of care behold a sinking bark,
By winds of sharp remorse unto thee driven;
O! let me not exposed be ruin's mark;
My faults confessed, Lord, say they are forgiven.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

'*And began to wash his feet with tears*'

SHE being stained herself, why did she strive
To make him clean who could not be defiled?
Why kept she not her tears for her own faults,
And not his feet? Though we could dive
In tears like seas, our sins are piled
Deeper than they, in words, and works, and thoughts.

Dear soul, she knew who did vouchsafe and deign
To bear her filth, and that her sins did dash
Even God himself; wherefore she was not loth,
  As she had brought wherewith to stain,
  So to bring in wherewith to wash:
And yet in washing one she washëd both.

GEORGE HERBERT.

'*Simon, Seest thou this woman?*'

SELF-BOASTING Pharisee! how blind
  A judge wert thou, and how unkind!
It was impossible that thou,
Who wert all false, should'st true grief know.
Is't just to judge her faithful tears
By that foul rheum thy false eye wears?

'This woman', say'st thou, 'is a sinner!'
And sat there none such at thy dinner?
Go leper, go! wash till thy flesh
Comes like a child's, spotless and fresh;
He is still leprous that still paints:
Who saint themselves, they are no saints.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'*For she loved much*'

HE cleansed my soul from all my filthy sin,
  And with my tears did wash it clean again;
Drave out the fiends and kindly entered in,
With grace to heal, that sorrow would have slain:
And in his love, did so my tears retain
  That every drop that fell upon his feet,
  Unto my soul did give a heavenly sweet. . . .

He felt my tears, though no man heard my weeping,
And gave me grace, though no man for me moved him;
Which made me know he had my soul in keeping,
Though sin too long too far from me removed him.
For sin once fled, how dear in soul I loved him,
His words can witness, that my soul did touch:
'Much is forgiven her for she lovëd much.'

NICHOLAS BRETON.

The Unforgivable Sin

WHO sins in hope, who, sinning, says,
'Sorrow for sin God's judgement stays!'
Against God's Spirit he lies; quite stops
Mercy with insult; dares, and drops—
Like a scorched fly that spins in vain
Upon the axis of its pain,
Then takes its doom, to limp and crawl
Blind and forgot, from fall to fall.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

Idle Words

PICK out of mirth, like stones out of thy ground,
Profaneness, filthiness, abusiveness;
These are the scum with which coarse wits abound:
The fine may spare these well, yet not go less.
All things are big with jest; nothing that's plain
But may be witty, if thou hast the vein.

GEORGE HERBERT.

'There is nothing hid . . .'

O LORD! in me there lieth naught
But to thy search revealëd lies;
For when I sit
Thou markest it,
No less thou notest when I rise;
Yea, closest closet of my thought
Hath open windows to thine eyes.

Thou walkest with me when I walk;
When to my bed for rest I go
I find thee there,
And everywhere;
Not youngest thought in me doth grow,
No, not one word I cast to talk,
But yet unuttered thou dost know.

MARY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

'And their eyes they have closed . . .'

WHEN the night's black curtain, spread,
Hides the day, and light bereaveth;
Then my wakening thought conceiveth
Other night, more dark, more dread:
There where worldlings, wilful-blind,
Loathe instruction, leave Light's mirror,
Double-nighted in dark error
Selfly put out light of mind.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

The Stilling of the Tempest

'Save us : we perish'

THE stern is broke, the sail is rent,
The ship is given to wind and wave,
All help is gone, the rock presènt,
That will be lost, what man can save?

With floods and storms thus we be tossed;
Awake, good Lord, to thee we cry:
Our ship is almost sunk and lost,
Thy mercy help our misery.

In thee we trust and in no wight;
Save us, as chickens under the hen;
Our crookedness thou canst make right,
Glory to thee for aye. Amen.

ANON. (16th Cent.).

'And he arose, and rebuked the wind'

THE mighty winds blow to and fro
From every airth by day and night;
We hear them thudding by us go,
Yet not conceive them with our sight:
But in a clap the Lord to please
Their blasts they quietly appease.

ALEXANDER HUME.

stern] rudder. airth] quarter.

'Why are ye so fearful?'

THERE is no storm but this
Of your own cowardice
That braves you out;
You are the storm that mocks
Yourselves; you are the rocks
Of your own doubt:
Besides this fear of danger, there 's no danger here;
And he that here fears danger, does deserve his fear.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

The Gadarene Demoniac

A MADMAN by a tomb,
A snake among the rocks he was
To wriggle down the fissures there,
And nakedly to strut and stare,
And spring on whosoe'er should pass,
Though bound with brass.

'Twas there that he had seen
A second self beside him clash
The brazen fetters on him bound,
And laugh and shriek and leap around,
And sharp stones in his own flesh dash,
Pitiless, rash. . . .

'Twas there that he had met
His Healer coming from the ship
After the tempest on the lake:
Though no man there his way might take,
The Twelve were there: he thought to leap
Like wolf on sheep.

All fear surprised him then,
For madness turned to terror there;
Peered horribly his head erect
A moment, and the step he checked
Still held his limbs, and in the air
His strong hands bare

Held out his shattered chains:
A mighty spasm his body tore;
His eyes shot out a bursting glare;
His voice died out, and wide his hair
Flamed upward, ere the damp could soar
From each wide pore.

For what had happened then?
What pang convulsed each furious limb?
Christ spake; and with his voice did pierce
That maddened heart exceeding fierce;
And at the word came forth from him
The Satanim.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON.

The Hem of his Garment

O GOD of Calvary and Bethlehem,
Thou who didst suffer rather than condemn,
Grant me to touch thy garment's healing hem.

Thou trailest thy fair robes of seamless light
Through this dark world of misery and night;
Its blackness cannot mar thy spotless white.

Thou dost not, Master, as we pass thee by,
Draw in thy robes lest we should come too nigh;
We see no scorn in thine all-sinless eye.

There is no shrinking even from our touch,
Thy tenderness to us is ever such
It can endure and suffer from us much.

ANNA ELIZABETH HAMILTON.

The Daughter of Jairus

TALITHA cumi! O thou Christ,
Hast kept the tryst?
Laugh not, O maidens! this is he
Of Galilee,
Of Nazareth,
The Christ that conquers death—
Dost catch a breath,
O Christ? O, Life!
Talitha cumi! See
The tumult as of some sweet strife
Strained tremulous up; up—
'Give her to drink!' he saith—
Yea, Lord, behold, a cup!

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

The Twelve sent forth

'I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves'

WHO would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.

There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound,—
His strength the more is;
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight;
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll not fear what men say;
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

JOHN BUNYAN.

'*Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*'

THE generous Christian must as well improve
In the quality of the serpent, as the dove;
He must be innocent; afraid to do
A wrong; and crafty to prevent it too.
They must be mixed, and tempered with true love:
An ounce of serpent serves a pound of dove.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'Ye shall be hated . . . for my name's sake'

THOUGH wolves against the silver moon do bark,
They blemish not her brightness, nor the spite
Of bawling curs, which she disdains to mark,
Can any whit eclipse her of her light.
So may'st thou slight the railing of ill tongues
If a clear shining conscience be thy guard,
Which, to defend thee from the worst of wrongs,
Will, as a wall of brass, be found as hard.

JOHN ANDREWS.

'But he that endureth to the end . . .'

IF to feel, in the ink of the slough,
And the sink of the mire,
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;
To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on for ever and fail and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:
Lord, if that were enough?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

'Fear not them which kill the body'

OUT of the dusk a shadow,
Then, a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then, a lark:
Out of the heart a rapture,
Then, a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

'But are not able to kill the soul'

THE door of death is made of gold,
That mortal eyes cannot behold;
But, when the mortal eyes are closed,
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,
The soul awakes; and, wondering, sees
In her mild hand the golden keys.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

'Ye are of more value than many sparrows'

HE who directs the sparrow's tender flight,
And sees him safely reach the heartless ground,
Guide thee in all thy passages aright,
And grant thy course be sure, thy resting sound.

RICHARD ZOUCHE.

'*A cup of cold water only*'

GOD who registers the cup
Of mere cold water, for his sake
To a disciple rendered up,
Disdains not his own thirst to slake
At the poorest love was ever offered:
And because it was my heart I proffered,
With true love trembling at the brim,
He suffers me to follow him.

ROBERT BROWNING.

'And gave it to the damsel'

The best of men
That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

THOMAS DEKKER.

The Death of John the Baptist

WHEN bloody Herod reignëd king
Within Judea's land,
Much woes his cruel will did bring,
By bloody fierce command.
Amongst the rest with grief oppressed,
Was good Saint John there slain,
Who on this day, 'midst sport and play,
A martyred death did gain.

King Herod, being in his tower,
Salome dancing spied,
As fair as any summer's flower
In all her painted pride;
Clad in bright gold, which to behold
King Herod's heart admired,
He bid her crave and she should have,
Though she his crown desired.

'A kingly crown I do not wish,
But Saint John's head,' she said;
'Wherefore, all bleeding in a dish,
Before me be it laid.'
Which was the thing she of the king
Desired with right good will,
Whose death was wrought, and to her brought:
Such minds have strumpets still.

Thus wine and women, we do see,
  Men's minds to folly win;
For Herod did too soon agree,
  And gave consent to sin.
Then on this day, as Scriptures say,
  Saint John did lose his head,
Whilst she did sing before the king
  As he at table fed.

TRADITIONAL CAROL.

Salome

HOW little didst thou think, while tripping down
To meet Herodias, from that wild carouse,
That thou wouldst win such terrible renown,
And men should name thy name with heavy brows!
For, in the fierce light of thy mother's guilt,
Before the nations thou art dancing still
Up to the wine-cups! Holy life was spilt,
And thy fair girlhood served a murderous will:
And so thou fillest up the historic page
With the keen scribe and ruthless Pharisee,
And, linked with all the furies of the age,
Hast found no pitying heart to plead for thee;
  For, lo! thy dancing-dress is bloody-red,
  And thy young hands have borne John Baptist's head!

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER.

The Feeding of the Multitude

OTHER men's hunger with strange feasts I quelled:
Mine own with stranger fastings, when I held
Twice twenty days' pure abstinence, to feed
My mind's devotion in my body's need.
A subtle inundation of quick food
Sprang in the spending fingers, and o'erflowed
The people's hunger, and when all were full
The broken meat was much more than the whole.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Walking on the Water

The dear might of him that walked the waves.

JOHN MILTON.

'O thou of little faith!'

CHRIST bids him come; and out he steps; when, lo!
As he went trembling on, a high-swol'n wave
Comes tumbling in his way, and frights him so
That all his courage it does straight out-brave.
His heart sank first, and then his feet, and all
But 's tongue, which to his Lord for help did call. . . .

Jesus, who never could his help deny
To suppliant sinners, reached his blessëd hand
(That hand in which alone security
Doth dwell; that hand which rules the ocean, and
Measures it in its hollow), and pulled out
Peter from the deep sea, and deeper doubt.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

'The flesh profiteth nothing'

LIKE as the damask rose you see,
Or like the blossom on the tree,
Or like the dainty flower of May,
Or like the morning to the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade,
Or like the gourd which Jonas had,
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out, and cut, and so is done:
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes,—and man, he dies.

Like to the grass that 's newly sprung,
Or like a tale that 's new begun,
Or like the bird that 's here to-day,
Or like the pearlëd dew of May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan,
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life, and death:
The grass withers, the tale is ended,
The bird is flown, the dew 's ascended,
The hour is short, the span not long,
The swan 's near death,—man's life is done.

SIMON WASTELL.

Defilement

AN evil thought, an evil eye,
An evil eye, an evil tongue,
An evil tongue, an evil act,
One evil act, an evil throng;
Till, from the heart beginning,
That evil thought
Hath well-nigh wrought
Necessity of sinning. . . .

One thought of evil unrestrained
In heart of Eve, to sin gave birth;
How hath that little stream o'erspread,
A mighty flood, this groaning earth!
Oh! watch—for much there needeth—
The door of sin,
Since from within
That which defiles proceedeth.

ANON. (1856).

The Syro-Phoenician Woman

'*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs.*'
'*Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.*'

HAD Christ rebuffed me as he did that mother,
I had been mortified so bitterly,
My smarting pride, all further speech to smother,
Had filled my heart with such black ecstasy
The miracle had ended differently—
The fiend had left my child, but entered me.

Yet if I'm human, was she so much better?
Or saw she something which the books omit—
Christ's eyes a-twinkle, as he spoke, that set her
Though whelmed in trouble, catching at her wit?
Did he not laugh, who owned her 'saying' fit?
And if he then blessed humour—cherish it.

ANON.

'The lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others'

HIS presence was a peace to all,
He bade the sorrowful rejoice;
Pain turned to pleasure at his call,
Health lived and issued from his voice.
He healed the sick, and sent abroad
The dumb rejoicing in the Lord.

The blind met daylight in his eye,
The joys of everlasting day;
The sick found health in his reply;
The cripple threw his crutch away.
Yet he with troubles did remain
And suffered poverty and pain.

JOHN CLARE.

'Ephphatha'

CHRIST bids the dumb tongue speak, it speaks; the sound
He charges to be quiet, it runs round:
If in the first he used his finger's touch,
His hand's whole strength here could not be too much.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'Whosoever will come after me, let him . . . take up his cross and follow me'

LEAVE me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things!
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course where birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me!

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it . . .'

THOUGH love repine, and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,—
'Tis man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.'

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

'*What shall it profit a man . . .*'

I WOULD I had, as much as might be had,
Of wealthy wishes, to the world's content:
That I might live all like a lusty lad,
And scorn the world and care not how it went:
But eat, and drink, and sleep, and sing, and play,
And so, in pleasures, pass my time away—

And yet I would not: for, too wealthy then,
I should be troubled with a world of toys:
Kindred, companions, troops of serving-men,
Fashion-devisers, fools, and girls, and boys,
Fiddlers, and jesters, monkeys, apes, baboons,
Drunkards, and swaggerers, and such trouble-towns.

Besides, I should forget to find the way
That leads the soul to her eternal bliss;
And then my state were at a woeful stay:
No, I would wish a better world than this;
And in afflictions here on earth to dwell,
Rather than seek my heaven on earth, and run to hell.

NICHOLAS BRETON.

On the Transfiguration

YE that in lowly valleys weeping sate,
And taught your humble souls to mourn of late
For sins and sufferings, breeding griefs and fears,
And make the rivers bigger with your tears,
Now cease your sad complaints till fitter time,
And with those three beloved apostles climb
To lofty Tabor, where your happy eyes
Shall see the Sun of glory brightly rise. . . .
By steep and briery paths ye must ascend;
But if ye know to what high scope ye tend,
No let nor danger can your steps restrain,
The crags will easy seem, the thickets plain.
Our Lord there stands, not with his painful cross
Laid on his shoulders, moving you to loss
Of precious things, nor calling you to bear
That burden which so much base worldlings fear.
Here are no promised hopes obscured with clouds,
No sorrow with dim veils true pleasure shrouds;
But perfect joy, which here discovered shines,
To taste of heavenly light your thoughts inclines,
And able is to wean deluded minds
From fond delight, which wretched mortals blinds.

SIR JOHN BEAUMONT.

The Shekel in the Fish's Mouth

WHAT luck had Peter! For he took a fish
That stored his purse, as well as filled his dish.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

The Little Child

'And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them'

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize
The prize of life from age and likelihood,
I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
Thinking how Christ said 'Be like one of these.'
For in the forest among many trees
Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scathed, but knotted trunks that raise on high
Their arms in stiff contortion, strained and bare;
Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

'As this little child'

HOW like an angel came I down!
How bright are all things here!
When first among his works I did appear
O how their glory did me crown!
The world resembled his eternity,
In which my soul did walk;
And every thing that I did see
Did with me talk.

A native health and innocence
Within my bones did grow,
And while my God did all his glories show
I felt a vigour in my sense
That was all spirit: I within did flow
With seas of life like wine;
I nothing in the world did know
But 'twas divine.

The streets seemed paved with golden stones,
The boys and girls all mine;
To me how did their lovely faces shine!
The sons of men all holy ones,
In joy and beauty, then appeared to me;
And every thing I found
(While like an angel I did see)
Adorned the ground.

Rich diamonds, and pearl, and gold
Might everywhere be seen;
Rare colours, yellow, blue, red, white, and green,
Mine eyes on every side behold:
All that I saw, a wonder did appear,
Amazement was my bliss:
That and my wealth met everywhere.
No joy to this!

For property itself was mine,
And hedges, ornaments;
Walls, houses, coffers, and their rich contents,
To make me rich combine.

Clothes, costly jewels, laces, I esteemed
My wealth by others worn:
For me they all to wear them seemed
When I was born.

THOMAS TRAHERNE
(Selected stanzas).

'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones . . .'

LEAVE thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

'He that is not against us is for us'

CALL him not heretic whose works attest
His faith in goodness by no creed confessed.
Whatever in love's name is truly done
To free the bound and lift the fallen one,
Is done to Christ. Whoso in deed and word
Is not against him, labours for our Lord.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

'If any man thirst . . .'

THESE are the waters of eternal life,
And he that drinks them shall not thirst again;
Not springs of Meribah, or floods of strife,
So move contentions, or produce disdain;
For such as taste this liquor, shall possess
Sure peace of conscience, perfect happiness.

I. F. (1613).

The Woman in the Temple

PHARISEE:

HARK, sir prophet, we all you pray
To give true doom and just sentence
Upon this woman, which this same day
In sinful adultery hath done offence.

[*But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.*]

ACCUSER:

Have done, sir prophet! Tell us your lore:
Shall we this woman with stonës kill?
Or to her house her home restore?
In this matter tell us your will.

SCRIBE:

In a cold study methinketh ye sit;
Good sir, awake, tell us your thought:
Shall she be stonëd? tell us your wit,—
Or in what rule shall she be brought?

JESUS:

Look which of you that never sin wrought
But is of life cleanèr than she,
Cast at her stones, and spare her nought—
Clean out of sin if that ye be.

[*And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it . . . went out one by one, saying:*]

PHARISEE:

Alas! alas! I am ashamed!
I am afeared that I shall die;
All my sins even properly named
Yon prophet did write before mine eye.
If that my fellows that did espy,
They will tell it both far and wide;
My sinful living if they outcry,
I wot never where my head to hide.

ACCUSER:

Alas! for sorrow my heart doth bleed,
All my sins yon man did write;
If that my fellows to them took heed,
I cannot me from death acquite.
I would I were hid somewhere out of sight,
That men should me nowhere see nor know;
If I be taken I am afflyght
In mickle shame I shall be throwe.

afflyght] afraid.

SCRIBE:

Alas the time that this betyd!
Right bitter care doth me embrace.
All my sins be now unhid,
Yon man before me them all doth trace.
If I were once out of this place,
To suffer death great and vengeance able,
I will never come before his face,
Though I should die in a stable.

JESUS:

Where be thy foemen that did thee accuse?
Why have they left us two alone?

WOMAN:

Because they could not themselves excuse
With shame they fled hence every one.

JESUS:

For those sins that thou hast wrought,
Hath any man condemnëd thee?

WOMAN:

Nay, forsooth, that hath there nought;
But in your gracë I put me.

JESUS:

For me thou shalt not condemnëd be;
Go home again and walk at large:
Look that thou live in honesty
And will no more to sin, I thee charge.

COVENTRY MIRACLE PLAY
(Selected).

betyd] happened. able] liable.

The New Law

JESUS was sitting in Moses' chair.
They brought the trembling woman there.
Moses commands she be stoned to death.
What was the sound of Jesus' breath?
He laid his hand on Moses' law;
The ancient heavens, in silent awe,
Writ with curses from pole to pole,
All away began to roll.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

'*I am the light of the world*'

THE folk him heldë day and night
Before them as a candle bright;
They him lovëd and doated aye,
And where he sleptë, night or day,
The clerëness of Godës light
Shone on him, no sun so bright.

ANON. (*Cursor Mundi*).

'*The truth shall make you free*'

WHAT man would live coffined with brick and stone,
Imprisoned from the influences of air,
And cramped with selfish landmarks everywhere,
When all before him stretches, furrowless and lone,
The unmapped prairie none can fence or own?

What man o'er one old thought would pore and pore,
Shut like a book between its covers thin
For every fool to leave his dog's-ears in,
When solitude is his, and God for evermore,
Just for the opening of a paltry door?

Come out, then, from the old thoughts and old ways,
Before you harden to a crystal cold
Which the new life can shatter, but not mould;
Freedom for you still waits, still, looking backward, stays,
But widens still the irretrievable space.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL
(Selected stanzas).

'If a man keep my word . . .'

BOAST not thy skill, the righteous man falls oft,
Yet falls but soft:
There may be dirt to mire him, but no stones
To crush his bones:
What if he staggers? nay, put the case he be
Foiled on his knee?
That very knee will bend to heaven, and woo
For mercy too.
The true-bred gamester ups afresh, and then
Falls to 't again;
Whereas the leaden-hearted coward lies,
And yields his conquered life, or cravened dies.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

An Eastern Legend

BESIDE the sun-smit road, 'tis said,
A feast for flies, a dead dog lay;
And all who passed there, with averted head
Sped by it on their way.

Christ, passing with the Twelve, 'tis said,
Paused by the thing, which severally
They scoffed, or scorned, or cursed from tail to head.
Thus they, while silent he.

When all had ceased, he raised his head:
'See ye no more than foulness? Nay!
Pearls are not whiter than its teeth,' 'tis said
He said, while silent they.

NORMAN AULT.

AND HE TAUGHT THEM

The Lost Sheep

Did ever man speak thus? was ever creature
In such a language courted? When the heat
Of wilful madness wrought the soul's defeature,
The God that should have punished doth intreat.

I. F. (1613).

YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

'Not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father'

PAUSE where apart the fallen sparrow lies,
And lightly tread;
For there the pity of a Father's eyes
Enshrines the dead.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

The Love of God

WHAT is more tender than a mother's love
To the sweet infant fondling in her arms?
What arguments need her compassion move
To hear its cries, and help it in its harms?
Now, if the tenderest mother were possessed
Of all the love within her single breast
Of all the mothers since the world began,
'Tis nothing to the love of God for man.

JOHN BYROM.

'Have faith in God'

EVEN as a nurse, whose child's imperfect pace
Can hardly lead his foot from place to place,
Leaves her fond kissing, sets him down, to go,
Nor does uphold him for a step or two;
But when she finds that he begins to fall,
She holds him up, and kisses him withal:
So God from man sometimes withdraws his hand
A while, to teach his infant faith to stand;
But when he sees his feeble strength begin
To fail, he gently takes him up again.
Lord, I'm a child; so guide my paces, then,
That I may learn to walk an upright man:
So shield my faith, that I may never doubt thee,
For I shall fall, if e'er I walk without thee.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'In the world ye shall have tribulation'

WHEN God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
'Let us', said he, 'pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersëd lie,
Contract into a span.'

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

'For if I should', said he,
'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature:
So both should losers be.

'Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.'

GEORGE HERBERT.

'*Your Father, which is in heaven*'

MY little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words and unkissed;
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;

For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept, and said:
'Ah, when at last we lie with trancëd breath,
Not vexing thee in death,
And thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,—
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."'

COVENTRY PATMORE.

Forgiveness

WILT thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
Shall shine, as he shines now and heretofore:
And, having done that, thou hast done,
I fear no more.

JOHN DONNE.

'*Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner . . .*'

HOW kind is Heaven to man! If here
One sinner doth amend,
Straight there is joy, and every sphere
In music doth contend.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

The Prodigal Son

'*And took his journey into a far country*'

TELL me, bright boy, tell me, my golden lad,
Whither away so frolic? why so glad?
What, all thy wealth in counsel? all thy state?
Are husks so dear? troth, 'tis a mighty rate.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'I will arise, and go to my Father . . .'

'I COUNTRIES changed, new pleasures out to find,
But, ah! for pleasure new I found new pain;
Enchanting pleasure so did reason blind,
That father's love and words I scorned as vain:
For tables rich, for bed, for frequent train
Of careful servants to observe my mind,
These herds I keep my fellows are assigned,
My bed a rock is, herbs my life sustain.
Now while I famine feel, fear worser harms,
Father and Lord, I turn; thy love, yet great,
My faults will pardon, pity mine estate.'
This, where an agëd oak had spread its arms,
Thought the lost child, while as the herds he led,
Not far off on the acorns wild them fed.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

'When he was yet a great way off . . .'

THOU not delight'st to see a sinner fall;
Thou hark'nest first before we come to call;
Thine ears are set wide open evermore;
Before we knock thou comest to the door.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE.

'Father, I have sinned . . .'

BEHOLD the prodigal! To thee I come,
To hail my Father and to seek my home.
Nor refuge could I find, nor friend abroad,
Straying in vice and destitute of God.

O let thy terrors and my anguish end!
Be thou my refuge and be thou my friend:
Receive the son thou didst so long reprove,
Thou that art the God of love!

MATTHEW PRIOR.

On the Parable of the Prodigal Son

WHAT sons and fathers have, with hopes and fears,
This son's and father's pictures drenched in tears
These nineteen hundred years!

But who in thought has lingered o'er another
True portrait to the life here, of that other
Man—son and elder brother?

Has no man lived to be a worthy son,
Or had a conscience save what made him shun
To look upon this one?

Christ, knowing God and man, three portraits drew
With careful hand, and if we love but two,
Whose, then, the fault, think you?

ANON.

'It is not the will of your Father . . . that one . . . should perish'

ALL, all for immortality;
Love like the light silently wrapping all;
Nature's amelioration blessing all;
The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images ripening.

Give me, O God, to sing that thought;
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith
In thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us
Belief in plan of thee enclosed in time and space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?
Nay, but the lack of it the dream;
And, failing it, life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.

WALT WHITMAN.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Shepherd of the Sheep

HOW sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot!
From the morn to the evening he strays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be fillëd with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their shepherd is nigh.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

'The good shepherd'

AS the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects,

The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;
Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage,
The promised Father of the future age.

ALEXANDER POPE.

'The door of the sheep'

CHRIST leads me through no darker rooms
Than he went through before:
He that into God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.

RICHARD BAXTER.

'He that is an hireling . . .'

HOW well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

JOHN MILTON.

'My sheep which was lost'

FROM the green pastures, mounts, and meads,
And from the crystal current of heaven's joys,
The wolf hath cast me, and foul error leads
My soon seducëd steps to such annoys,
That where I feed my starving food destroys.
Seek me, dear Shepherd; else I shall be lost,
From blessëd vales to thorns and thistles tossed. . . .

Behold my feet entangled in the briers,
And envious brambles tear my fleece away:
To loose them, Lord, my gasping soul desires,
Lest to the ravens I become a prey:
Such fruit they reap that run so far astray.
Then on thy shoulders take me to thy fold,
The sheep whom thou hast bought, and Satan sold.

G. ELLIS.

'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold'

TRUTH is one;
And, in all lands beneath the sun,
Whoso hath eyes to see may see
The tokens of its unity.
No scroll of creed its fulness wraps,
We trace it not by schoolboy maps,
Free as the sun and air it is
Of latitudes and boundaries.
In Vedic verse, in dull Koràn,
Are messages of good to man;

The angels to our Aryan sires
Talked by the earliest household fires;
The prophets of the elder day,
The slant-eyed sages of Cathay,
Read not the riddle all amiss
Of higher life evolved from this.

It must be that he witnesses
Somehow to all men that he is:
That something of his saving grace
Reaches the lowest of the race,
Who, through strange creed and rite, may draw
The hints of a diviner law.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER
(Selected).

'I should lose nothing

OH yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete. . . .

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

'I will give you rest'

NEVER weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more,
Than my weary sprite now longs to fly out of my troubled breast.
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest!

Ever blooming are the joys of heaven's high paradise,
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines; whose beams the blessëd only see.
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to thee!

THOMAS CAMPION.

'Ye shall find rest unto your souls'

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss thee so
Who art not missed by any that entreat.
Speak to me as to Mary at thy feet!
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,
Let my tears drop like amber, while I go
In reach of thy divinest voice complete
In humanest affection—thus, in sooth,
To lose the sense of losing. As a child,
Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,
Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth
Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Without and Within

'IF I ascend to heaven, thou art there;
There too, thou, if I make my bed in hell;
And if I take the wings of morning, there
Within the sea's most utmost parts to dwell,
Thy hand shall lead and hold me, even there.'
Of old, thy singer thus; and in my heart
I hid myself from thee, long years apart.

'Raise but the stone, and thou shalt find me there;
Or cleave the wood, and there am I. I say
Wherever there is one alone, yea, there
Am I in him.' These thy new words, to-day
I heard, still darkly hid, and looked, and there—
Where I so long had thought thou hadst no part,—
I found thee hiding with me in my heart.

NORMAN AULT.

(The second stanza contains one of the sayings of Christ from the Oxyrhynchus papyrus discovered in 1897.)

PARABLES

'*Without a parable spake he not unto them*'

WHY did our blessëd Saviour please to break
His sacred thoughts in parables, and speak
In dark enigmas? Whosoe'er thou be
That find'st them so, they were not spoke to thee.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

New Wine and Old Bottles

OLD crazy casks are not designed to hold
New wines; nor yet new vessels for the old.
Old must with old, and new with new be filled;
Else will the vessels break, and wine be spilled.
These empty vessels are thy heart and mine;
The law and gospel represents the wine:
The new 's the spirit, and the old 's the letter;
With reverence to the text--the new 's the better.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

The Sower

IT is not causeless, Christ did use compare
Man's mind unto the soil that tillëd is;
They both full well indeed agree in this,
Untillëd, they unfruitful are and bare.
Such seed as is bestowed, they do receive,
And both yield fruit as God doth give increase;
Some seed is spilt, some Satan doth bereave,
Some prosper and produce a plenteous peace;
And as devouring fowls do never cease,
Nor worms, nor swine, to seek do never miss
Each one to spoil a part, whilst ploughman his
Due recompense of pains cannot possess;
So doth the soul, though tilled with studious care,
Great store of weeds bring forth, good fruits full rare.

HENRY LOK.

The Wheat and the Tares

CHRIST'S church is likened by him to a field
Which tares and wheat confusedly doth yield;
And he commandeth us to let both grow
Together till the harvest, lest that now
By hasty separation, e'er the day,
We, not good husbands, but the wild boars play,
Rooting up both, whereas they both should stand,
And wait the weeding of the angels' hand.

THOMAS WASHBOURNE.

The Seed growing secretly

DEAR, secret greenness! nursed below
Tempests and winds and winter-nights,
Vex not, that but one sees thee grow,
That One made all these lesser lights.

If those bright joys he singly sheds
On thee, were all met in one crown,
Both sun and stars would hide their heads;
And moons, though full, would get them down. . . .

Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb;
Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life, and watch
Till the white wingëd reapers come!

HENRY VAUGHAN

husbands] husbandmen.

The Pearl of Great Price

WHO loves this life, from love his love doth err,
And choosing dross rich treasure doth deny,
Leaving the pearl, Christ's counsel to prefer
With selling all we have the same to buy.
O happy soul that doth disburse a sum
To gain a kingdom in the life to come.

ANON. (R. Alison's *An Hour's Recreation*, 1606).

The Good Samaritan

'*And passed by on the other side*'

WHY dost thou wound my wounds, O thou that passest by,
Handling and turning them with an unwounded eye?
The calm that cools thine eye does shipwreck mine, for oh,
Unmoved to see one wretched, is to make him so.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'*Who is my neighbour?*'

'LORD, who is my neighbour?'
'The Samaritan.'
'Sound the pipe and tabor! Welcome such a man!'

'Lord, who is my neighbour?'
'He the thieves beset.'
'Though he'll cause me labour, I will love him yet.'

'Lord, who is my neighbour?'
'The Levite and the Priest.'
'Even those I may bear, though I'll love them least.'
'Lord, who is my neighbour?'
'Dear one, I am he.'
'Lord, ah no! I pray, bare not thy face to me.'

ANON.

The Rich Fool

GO, silly worm, drudge, trudge, and travel,
Despising pain,
So thou may'st gain
Some honour, or some golden gravel;
But death the while, to fill his number,
With sudden call
Takes thee from all,
To prove thy days but dream and slumber.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

'*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God*'

HOW vain the toils that mortal men do take
To hoard up gold, that time doth turn to dross,
Forgetting him who only for their sake
His precious blood did shed upon the cross,
And taught us all in heaven to hoard our treasure,
Where true increase doth grow above all measure.

ANON. (W. Byrd's *Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets*, 1611).

travel] travail.

'For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth'

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content,
The quiet mind is richer than a crown,
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent,
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest,
The cottage that affords no pride nor care,
The mean that 'grees with country music best,
The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare:
Obscurëd life sets down a type of bliss,
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

ROBERT GREENE.

('modest fare' is conjectural; original reading is 'music's fare'.)

The Same

A NAKED house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit,
And poplars at the garden foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day's declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The Fig Tree

ART thou not planted by the water-side?
Know'st not thy Lord by fruit is glorified?
The sentence is, 'Cut down the barren tree!'
Bear fruit, or else thy end will cursëd be!

He, that about thy root takes pains to dig,
Would, if on thee were found but one good fig,
Preserve thee from the axe; but, barren tree,
Bear fruit, or else thy end will cursëd be!

The utmost end of patience is at hand,
'Tis much if thou much longer here doth stand.
O cumber-ground, thou art a barren tree,
Bear fruit, or else thy end will cursëd be!

JOHN BUNYAN.

'*Let it alone this year also*'

JUDGE not too fast. This tree that does appear
So barren, may be fruitful the next year:
Hast thou not patience to expect the hour?
I fear thy own are crabs, they be so sour:
Thy judgement oft may tread beside the text;
A Saul to-day, may prove a Paul, the next.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

The Lowest Place

GIVE me the lowest place: not that I dare
Ask for that lowest place, but thou hast died
That I might live and share
Thy glory by thy side.

Give me the lowest place: or, if for me
That lowest place too high, make one more low
Where I may sit and see
My God and love thee so.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

The Great Supper

UNTO thy princely wedding, Lord, are bid
Of every sort some guests to feast with thee:
One that a spouse but late before had wed,
One oxen bought, one taken land to fee;
They from the banquet therefor absent be,
Regarding not thy messengers of grace.
In number of the like, Lord, hold not me,
But let me have, I crave, the offered place.
Yet e'er that I appear before thy face,
A wedding garment first I must put on,
My own unrighteous clothing is too base,
And merchandise of merits now are gone;
Then since thou call'st, with faith do thou me clothe,
A lame blind beggar, Lord, do thou not loathe.

HENRY LOK.

Dives and Lazarus

AS it fell out upon a day,
Rich Dives he made a feast,
And he invited all his friends
And gentry of the best.

Then Lazarus laid him down and down,
And down at Dives' door;
'Some meat, some drink, brother Dives,
Bestow upon the poor!'

'Thou art none of my brother, Lazarus,
That lies begging at the door;
No meat nor drink will I give thee,
Nor bestow upon the poor.' . . .

Then Dives sent out his merry men
To whip poor Lazarus away;
They had no power to strike a stroke,
But flung their whips away.

Then Dives sent out his hungry dogs
To bite him as he lay;
They had no power to bite at all,
But licked his sores away.

As it fell out upon a day,
Poor Lazarus sickened and died;
There came two angels out of heaven,
His soul therein to guide.

'Rise up, rise up, brother Lazarus,
And go along with me;
For you've a place prepared in heaven,
To sit on an angel's knee.'

As it fell out upon a day,
Rich Dives sickened and died;
There came two serpents out of hell,
His soul therein to guide.

'Rise up, rise up, brother Dives,
And go with us to see
A dismal place prepared in hell,
To sit on a serpent's knee.'

Then Dives looked up with his eyes,
And saw poor Lazarus blest;
'Give a drop of water, brother Lazarus,
To quench my flaming thirst.

'O had I as many years to abide
As there are blades of grass,
Then there would be an end, but now
Hell's pains will never pass.

'O was I now but alive again,
The space of one half-hour!
O that I had made my peace secure!
Then the devil should have no power.'

OLD BALLAD.

The Same

LAZAR and Dives liveden diversely,
And diverse guerdon hadden they thereby.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

The Pharisee and the Publican

TWO went to pray! O, rather say
One went to brag, th' other to pray:
One stands up close and treads on high,
Where th' other dares not send his eye;
One nearer to God's altar trod,
The other to the altar's God.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted'

HUMBLE we must be, if to heaven we go:
High is the roof there, but the gate is low.
Whene'er thou speak'st, look with a lowly eye:
Grace is increasëd by humility.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Labourers in the Vineyard

HE that endured the tyranny of heat,
The morning sorrows, and the midday sweat,
The evening toil, and burden of the day,
Had but his promised penny for his pay.
Others, that loitered all the morning, stood
In the idle market; whose unpractised blood
Scarce felt the warmth of labour, nor could show
A blush of action, had his penny too.
What wages can we merit as our own?
Slaves that are bought with price can challenge none
But only stripes. Alas, if servants could
Do more than bid, they do but what they should:
When man endeavours, and where Heaven engages
Himself by promise, they are gifts, not wages.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'*They received every man a penny*'

ALL service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Ten Virgins

'*The wise took oil in their vessels*'

THY care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, virgin wise and pure.

JOHN MILTON.

'*And the door was shut*'

LATE, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

The Talents

'*And to another one*'

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless,—though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide,—
'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'
I fondly ask; but patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.'

JOHN MILTON.

'*I should have received back mine own with interest*'

HEAVEN doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues; nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

'Enter thou into the joy of thy lord'

AS from the darkening gloom a silver dove
Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light
On pinions that naught moves but pure delight,
So fled thy soul into the realms above,
Regions of peace and everlasting love;
Where happy spirits, crowned with circlets bright
Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.

JOHN KEATS.

'From him that hath not . . .'

I HAVE left all upon the shameful field,
Honour and hope, my God, and all but life;
Spurless, with sword reversed and dinted shield,
Degraded and disgraced, I leave the strife.

From him that hath not, shall there not be taken
E'en that he hath, when he deserts the strife?
Life left by all life's benefits forsaken,
O keep the promise, Lord, and take the life.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
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THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

'Forbid them not'

Those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessëd feet,
Which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

On James and John wishing Fire on the Samaritans

THE 'sons of thunder' was enough for you;
You need not to be sons of lightning too.

THOMAS FULLER.

'The foxes have holes . . .'

THOUGH fox and bird could find both hole and nest,
Where found his head reposëd place for rest?

SAMUEL ROWLANDS.

'No man, having put his hand to the plough . . .'

MAN, look not back,—it would be but to see
How crooked is the furrow ploughed by thee.

ANON.

The Seventy sent forth

CHRIST, I have read, did to his chaplains say,
Sending them forth, 'Salute no man by th' way:'
Not that he taught his ministers to be
Unsmooth, or sour, to all civility;
But to instruct them to avoid all snares
Of tardidation in the Lord's affairs.
Manners are good: but till his errand ends,
Salute we must nor strangers, kin, or friends.

ROBERT HERRICK.

Mary and Martha

MARTHA with joy received her blessëd Lord;
Her Lord she welcomes, feasts, and entertains:
Mary sat silent; hears, but speaks no word;
Martha takes all, and Mary takes no pains:
Mary's to hear; to feast him Martha's care is;
Now which is greater, Martha's love, or Mary's

Martha is full of trouble, to prepare;
Martha respects his good beyond her own:
Mary sits still at ease, and takes no care;
Mary desires to please herself, alone:
The pleasure 's Mary's; Martha's all the care is;
Now which is greater, Martha's love, or Mary's?

'Tis true, our blessëd Lord was Martha's guest;
Mary was his, and in his feast delighted:
Now which hath greater reason to love best,
The bountiful inviter, or the invited?
Sure, both loved well; but Mary was the debtor,
And therefore should, in reason, love the better.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

The Sisters

THE waves forever move;
The hills forever rest:
Yet each the heavens approve,
And Love alike hath blessed
A Martha's household care,
A Mary's cloistered prayer.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

'Martha, Martha'

THE repetition of the name made known
No other than Christ's full affection.

ROBERT HERRICK.

'The night cometh'

O MORTAL folk, you may behold and see
How I lie here, sometime a mighty knight:
The end of joy and all prosperity
Is death at last, thorough his course and might:
After the day there cometh the dark night,
For though the dayë be never so long,
At last the bells ringeth to evensong.

STEPHEN HAWES.

'When no man can work'

AWAKE, awake, thou heavy sprite,
That sleep'st the deadly sleep of sin.
Rise now and walk the ways of light,
'Tis not too late yet to begin.
Seek heaven early, seek it late;
True faith still finds an open gate.

Get up, get up, thou leaden man,
Thy tracks to endless joy or pain —
Yield but the model of a span,
Yet burns out thy life's lamp in vain.
One minute bounds thy bane or bliss;
Then watch and labour while time is.

THOMAS CAMPION.

The Tower in Siloam

THEY are not always worst who do sustain
The greatest plagues, nor yet the others free
Of guilt (howbeit unpunished they remain)
But rather for the more part worse they be.
Christ's holy judgement teacheth this to me
By fall of Silo tower, the which, indeed,
Slew not the worst; and even the best had need
Their due deserts in others' doom to see.

HENRY LOK.

The Crooked Woman

CHRIST, that did cure this weakling, doth delight
That wrongs be rectified, and all upright.

THOMAS BANCROFT.

'The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light'

YOUTH! thou wear'st to manhood now,
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen:
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches!
For the gambol and the jest
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The Raising of Lazarus

'*Jesus wept*'

MARY rose up as one in sleep might rise,
And went to meet her brother's friend: and they
Who tarried with her said, 'She goes to pray,
And weep again where Lazarus' body lies.'
And so with hard-wrung hands and so with sighs
They stood before him on the public way.
'Hadst thou been with him, Lord, upon that day
He had not died,' she said, drooping her eyes.

Mary and Martha with bowed faces kept
Holding on either side his garments. 'Where
Have ye laid him?' he asked. 'Lord, come and see.'
The sound of grieving voices heavily
And universally was round him there,
A sound to smite the spirit. Jesus wept.

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI.

'*Much people . . . came . . . that they might see Lazarus*'

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

The Ten Lepers

'*And one of them . . . turned back . . .*'

NOT white and shining like an ardent flame,
Not like thy mother and the saints in bliss,
But white from head to foot I bear my blame,
White as the leper is.

Unclean! unclean! But thou canst make me clean:
Yet if thou clean'st me, Lord, see that I be
Like that one grateful leper of the ten
Who ran back praising thee.

But if I must forget, take back thy word;
Be I unclean again but not ingrate.
Before I shall forget thee, keep me, Lord,
A sick man at thy gate.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.

The Little Children

'Suffer the little children to come unto me'

SWEET baby, sleep! what ails my dear,
What ails my darling thus to cry?
Be still, my child, and lend thine ear,
To hear me sing thy lullaby:
My pretty lamb, forbear to weep;
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep. . . .

Sweet baby, sleep, and nothing fear;
For whosoever thee offends
By thy Protector threatened are,
And God and angels are thy friends.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

When God with us was dwelling here,
In little babes he took delight;
Such innocents as thou, my dear,
Are ever precious in his sight.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep,

GEORGE WITHER.

'Of such is the kingdom of heaven'

HAPPY those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,

Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face;
When on some gilded cloud, or flower,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train,
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm-trees;
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move,
And, when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'And he took them in his arms, and blessed them'

THE world is ours till sunset,
Holly and fire and snow;
And the name of our dead brother
Who loved us long ago.

The grown folk mighty and cunning,
They write his name in gold;
But we can tell a little
Of the million tales he told.

He taught them laws and watchwords,
To preach and struggle and pray;
But he taught us deep in the hayfield
The games that the angels play.

Had he stayed here for ever,
Their world would be wise as ours—
And the king be cutting capers,
And the priest be picking flowers.

But the dark day came: they gathered:
On their faces we could see
They had taken and slain our brother,
And hanged him on a tree.

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON.

The Rich Young Ruler

HOW well our Saviour and the landed youth
Agreed a little while! And, to say truth,
Had he had will and power in his hand
To keep the law, but as he kept his land,
No doubt, his soul had found the sweet fruition
Of his own choice desires without petition.
But he must sell, and follow; or else, not
Obtain his heaven. O now his heaven 's too hot:
He cannot stay; he has no business there;
He'll rather miss, than buy his heaven too dear.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'*If thou wilt be perfect . . .*'

BUT Christ, that of perfection is well,
Bad not every wight he should go sell
All that he had, and give it to the poor,
And in such wise follow him and his fore.
He spake to them that would live perfectly;
And lordings, by your leave, that am not I.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

well] the well, or spring. fore] path.

Blind Bartimeus

BLIND Bartimeus at the gates
Of Jericho in darkness waits;
He hears the crowd;—he hears a breath
Say, 'It is Christ of Nazareth!'
And calls, in tones of agony,
Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με.[1]

The thronging multitudes increase;
Blind Bartimeus, hold thy peace!
But still, above the noisy crowd,
The beggar's cry is shrill and loud;
Until they say, 'He calleth thee!'
Θάρσει, ἔγειραι, φωνεῖ σε.[2]

Then saith the Christ, as silent stands
The crowd, 'What wilt thou at my hands?'
And he replies, 'Oh, give me light!
Rabbi, restore the blind man's sight!'
And Jesus answers, Ὕπαγε·
Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.[3]

Ye that have eyes, yet cannot see,
In darkness and in misery,
Recall those mighty voices three,
Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με:
Θάρσει, ἔγειραι, ὕπαγε:
Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

[1] 'O Jesus, do thou pity me.'
[2] 'Courage! arise, he calleth thee.'
[3] 'Go thy way;
It is thy faith hath savëd thee.'

Zaccheus

METHINKS I see with what a busy haste
Zaccheus climbed the tree. But, O, how fast
How full of speed, canst thou imagine (when
Our Saviour called) he powdered down again!
He ne'er made trial if the boughs were sound,
Or rotten; nor how far 'twas to the ground.
There was no danger feared. At such a call,
He'll venture nothing, that dare fear a fall.
Needs must he down, by such a spirit driven;
Nor could he fall, unless he fell to Heaven.
Down came Zaccheus, ravished from the tree;
Bird that was shot, ne'er dropped so quick as he.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'To-day I must abide at thy house'

YET if his majesty, our sovereign lord,
Should of his own accord
Friendly himself invite,
And say 'I'll be your guest to-morrow night,'
How should we stir ourselves, call and command
All hands to work! 'Let no man idle stand.
Set me fine Spanish tables in the hall,
See they be fitted all;
Let there be room to eat,
And order taken that there want no meat.
See every sconce and candlestick made bright,
That without tapers they may give a light.

Look to the presence: are the carpets spread,
The daïs o'er the head,
The cushions in the chairs,
And all the candles lighted on the stairs?
Perfume the chambers, and in any case
Let each man give attendance in his place.'
Thus if the king were coming would we do;
And 'twere good reason too:
For 'tis a duteous thing
To show all honour to an earthly king;
And, after all our travail and our cost,
So he be pleased, to think no labour lost.
But at the coming of the King of heaven
All 's set at six and seven:
We wallow in our sin;
Christ cannot find a chamber in the inn.
We entertain him always like a stranger,
And, as at first, still lodge him in the manger.

ANON. (Christ Church MS. 17th Cent.).

'He went on before, going up to Jerusalem'

'AH, traveller, why choose this way—
This rather than another?'
'This way man calls me, him I must obey,
For is he not my brother—
He only, and none other?'

'But, traveller, why all this speed?
Such haste ends in undoing.'
'If I should tarry now in his dire need,
Disgrace were mine and ruing—
And that were mine undoing.'

'Then what is it thou look'st to see
There at thy journey's ending?'
'His feeble hands outstretched for help to me
Ere all is yet past mending,
And nothing left but ending.'

'And what is it thou think'st to hear—
Blessings or curses, crying?'
'If needs be, both; it is not those I fear,
But that e'en now he 's dying
With none to heed his crying.'

'But to him is no smoother way
Than this thy torn feet follow?'
'Others I 've trod—in vain; by this I may
Be there to comrade him at end of day;
So, spite of hill and hollow,
This way I choose to follow.'

ANON.

GATHERING SHADOWS

Hosanna!

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
  Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
  Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
  With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
  Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

IN JERUSALEM

The Triumphal Entry

'Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh . . .'

COME, drop your branches, strow the way,
Plants of the day!
Whom sufferings make most green and gay.
The king of grief, the man of sorrow
Weeping still, like the wet morrow,
Your shades and freshness comes to borrow.

Put on, put on your best array;
Let the joyed road make holy-day,
And flowers, that into fields do stray,
Or secret groves, keep the high-way.

Trees, flowers, and herbs; birds, beasts, and stones,
That since man fell, expect with groans
To see the Lamb, come, all at once,
Lift up your heads and leave your moans!
For here comes he
Whose death will be
Man's life, and your full liberty.

Hark! how the children shrill and high
'Hosanna' cry;
Their joys provoke the distant sky,
Where thrones and seraphim reply;
And their own angels shine and sing
In a bright ring:
Such young, sweet mirth
Makes heaven and earth
Join in a joyful symphony.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'*A colt the foal of an ass*'

WHEN fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON.

'He beheld the city, and wept over it'

BLESSËD, unhappy City! dearly loved
But still unkind! Art this day nothing moved?
Art senseless still? Oh, canst thou sleep
When God himself for thee doth weep?
Stiff-neckëd Jews! your fathers' breed
That served the calf, not Abraham's seed,
Had not the babes 'Hosanna' cried,
The stones had spoke what you denied.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

The Cleansing of the Temple

LORD, come away;
Why dost thou stay?
Thy road is ready; and thy paths, made straight,
With longing expectation wait
The consecration of thy beauteous feet.
Ride on triumphantly: behold we lay
Our lusts and proud wills in thy way.
Hosanna! welcome to our hearts? Lord, here
Thou hast a temple too, and full as dear
As that of Sion; and as full of sin:
Nothing but thieves and robbers dwell therein:
Enter, and chase them forth, and cleanse the floor;
Crucify them, that they may never more
Profane that holy place
Where thou hast chose to set thy face.
And then if our stiff tongues shall be
Mute in the praises of thy Deity,
The stones out of the temple-wall
Shall cry aloud, and call
Hosanna! and thy glorious footsteps greet.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

The Fig Tree Cursed

LIKE as the braving green, but barren, tree
(That flourished fair when not a fig was found)
Christ cursed with, 'Never fruit grow more on thee,'
Because it did no good, but cumber ground:
So fares the false deluding show of mine,
Green-leaved beginning, withered fruitless fine.

SAMUEL ROWLANDS.

'*If ye have faith . . .*'

MY sins are like to mountains, that arise
Above the clouds, and threat the threatening skies.
Lord, give me faith; and let that faith be proved
In leaving not a mountain unremoved.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'*Render to Caesar . . . and to God . . .*'

ALL we have is God's, and yet
Caesar challenges a debt;
Nor hath God a thinner share
Whatever Caesar's payments are.
All is God's; and yet 'tis true
All we have is Caesar's too.
All is Caesar's; and what odds,
So long as Caesar's self is God's?

RICHARD CRASHAW.

The Great Commandment

'LOVE God' and 'Love your neighbour,' 'Watch and pray,'
'Do as you would be done unto;'
O dark instructions, even as dark as day!
Who can these Gordian knots undo?

GEORGE HERBERT.

'*All ye are brethren*'

THIS moment yearning and thoughtful, sitting alone,
It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful;
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy, France, Spain,
Or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or Japan, talking other dialects;
And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become attached to them as I do to men in my own lands:
O, I know we should be brethren and lovers,
I know I should be happy with them.

WALT WHITMAN.

'*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees!*'

HE judged them with as terrible a frown
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down:
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs . . .

The astonished vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripped the impostors in the noonday sun,
Showed that they followed all they seemed to shun:
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries he that dwelt in it disdained;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Washed with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.

WILLIAM COWPER.

'*Ye build the tombs of the prophets*'

THOU trimm'st a prophet's tomb, and dost bequeath
The life thou took'st from him unto his death:
Vain man! the stones that on his tomb do lie,
Keep but the score of them that made him die.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

The Widow's Mite

TWO mites, two drops, yet all her house and land,
Falls from a steady heart, though trembling hand:
The other's wanton wealth foams high and brave;
The other cast away, she only gave.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'*She of her want . . .*'

CHEAP gifts best fit poor givers. We are told
Of the lone mite, the cup of water cold,
That in their way approved the offerer's zeal.
True love shows costliest, where the means are scant;
And, in her reckoning, they abound, who want.

CHARLES LAMB.

The Corn of Wheat

'*If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*'

SO a small seed that in the earth lies hid
And dies, reviving bursts her cloddy side,
Adorned with yellow locks, of new is born,
And doth become a mother great with corn;
Of grains brings hundreds with it, which when old
Enrich the furrows with a sea of gold.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

'*He that loveth his life shall lose it . . .*'

O WRETCHED man! leave off therefore,
In worldly things put trust no more,
Which yields nothing but sorrow:
To God, thy Lord, with speed convert,
Because thou most uncertain art
If thou shalt live to-morrow.
Leave off to quaff, to dance and play:
Remember still the judgement day.

HUMFREY GIFFORD.

THE END OF THE WORLD

'What shall be the sign?'

'The sun shall be darkened . . .'

ALL the bright lights of heaven
I will make dark over thee;
One night shall be as seven
That its skirts may cover thee;
I will send on thy strong men a sword,
On thy remnant a rod;
Ye shall know that I am the Lord,
Saith the Lord God.

As the tresses and wings of the wind
Are scattered and shaken,
I will scatter all them that have sinned,
There shall none be taken;
As a sower that scattereth seed,
So will I scatter them;
As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
I will break and shatter them.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,
Come down and cover us;
To the cloud on thy left and thy right,
Be thou spread over us;
A snare shall be as thy mother,
And a curse thy bride;
Thou shalt put her away, and another
Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day
  Nor lie down by night;
Would God it were dark! thou shalt say;
  Would God it were light!
And the sight of thine eyes shall be made
  As the burning of fire;
And thy soul shall be sorely afraid
  For thy soul's desire.

For your high things ye shall have lowly,
  Lamentation for song:
For, behold, I God am holy,
  I the Lord am strong;
Ye shall seek me and shall not reach me
  Till the wine-press be trod;
In that hour ye shall turn and beseech me,
  Saith the Lord God.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
(Selected stanzas).

'*But of that day and hour knoweth no man*'

GOD hides from man the reckoning day, that he
  May fear it ever for uncertainty:
That being ignorant of that one, he may
Expect the coming of it every day.

ROBERT HERRICK.

'But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved'

WHOEVER fights, whoever falls,
Justice conquers evermore,
Justice after as before,—
And he who battles on her side,
God, though he were ten times slain,
Crowns him victor glorified,
Victor over death and pain,
Forever: but his erring foe,
Self-assured that he prevails,
Looks from his victim lying low,
And sees aloft the red right arm
Redress the eternal scales.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Second Coming

'The Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven . . .'

RIDE on in glory, on the morning's wings,
Thrice puissant Conqueror! in glory ride;
That heaven, as horse, courageous doth bestride,
Who, whether thou disposest, succour brings:
Ride on the glorious clouds, high King of kings!

BARNABY BARNES.

whether] wherever.

'With a great sound of a trumpet'

AS from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky.

JOHN DRYDEN.

'Shall gather together his elect'

O DAY of life, of light, of love!
The only day dealt from above!
A day so fresh, so bright, so brave,
'Twill show us each forgotten grave,
And make the dead, like flowers, arise
Youthful and fair to see new skies.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

The Last Judgement

'Then shall he sit upon the throne'

THAT day, time's utmost line,
When all shall perish but what is divine;
When the great trumpet's mighty blast shall shake
The earth's foundations, till the hard rocks quake

And melt like piles of snow; when lightnings move
Like hail, and the white thrones are set above—
That day, when sent in glory by the Father,
The Prince of Life his blest elect shall gather;
Millions of angels round about him flying,
While all the kindreds of the earth are crying,
And he, enthroned upon the clouds, shall give
His last just sentence, who must die, who live.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'*And before him shall be gathered all nations*'

FROM the first man God made to the last that died,
The names of all were here exemplified.
Emperors and kings, patriarchs, and tribes forgotten,
The conquerors of the world—mouldered and rotten—
Lords, beggars, men and women, young and old,
Up, at a bar set forth, their hands did hold.
The Judge being set in open court, were laid
Huge books, at sight of which were all dismayed,
Would fain have shrunk back, and fell down with fear.
In sheets of brass all stories written were
(Which those great volumes held) charactered deep
With pens of steel, eternal files to keep
Of every nation since the world began,
And every deed, word, thought, of every man.

THOMAS DEKKER.

'The sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left'

ABOUT him stand two flocks of differing notes,
One of white sheep, and one of speckled goats;
The first possess his right hand, and the last
Stand on his left. The spotted goats are cast
All into thick, deep shades, while from his right
The white sheep pass into a whiter light.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me'

THIS ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleet and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
Every night and all,
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last;
And Christ receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every night and all,
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christ receive thy saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every night and all,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bane;
And Christ receive thy saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst pass,
Every night and all,
To Brig o' Dread thou comest at last;
And Christ receive thy saule.

From Brig o' Dread when thou mayst pass,
Every night and all,
To Purgatory fire thou comest at last;
And Christ receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every night and all,
The fire shall never make thee shrink;
And Christ receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou never gavest nane,
Every night and all,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christ receive thy saule.

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleet and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

OLD BALLAD.

'The outer darkness'

A UNIVERSE of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire.

JOHN MILTON.

'Into everlasting punishment'

FROM the first hour the heavens were made
Unto the last, when all shall fade,
Count, if thou canst, the drops of dew,
The stars of heaven, and streams that flow,
The falling snow, the dropping showers,
And in the month of May the flowers,
Their scents and colours, and what store
Of grapes and apples autumn bore;
How many grains the summer bears,
What leaves the wind in winter tears;
Count all the creatures in the world,
The motes which in the air are hurled,
The hairs of beasts and mankind, and
The shores' innumerable sand,
The blades of grass, and to these last
Add all the years which now are past,
With those whose course is yet to come,
And all their minutes,—in one sum.
When all is done, the damnëd's state
Out-runs them still, and knows no date.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'The kingdom prepared for you . . .'

O HAPPY harbour of the saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,
  There envy bears no sway;
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
  But pleasure every way.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
  Thy bulwarks diamonds square;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
  Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
  With carbuncles do shine;
Thy very streets are paved with gold,
  Surpassing clear and fine. . . .

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
  Continually are green;
There grows such sweet and pleasant flowers
  As nowhere else are seen.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
  The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
  The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
  And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
  And evermore do sing.

F. B. P. (1601).

THE END OF THE WORLD

'Into life eternal'

THEN 'gin I think on that which nature said,
Of that same time when no more change shall be,
But steadfast rest of all things, firmly stayed
Upon the pillars of eternity,
That is contrair to mutability:
For all that moveth doth in change delight:
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
With him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:
O! that great Sabaoth God, grant me that sabbath's sight!

EDMUND SPENSER.

AT BETHANY

Mary, Sister of Lazarus

The Box of Ointment

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

hight] named.

'Let her alone'

'WHY need this needless waste be made,' say they,
'Of what was worth three hundred pence at least?
It better had been sold, and given away
To poor for alms against this holy feast:
'Tis pity such sweet oil, so dearly bought,
With idle vain expense should come to nought.'

Thus they: but Christ, that sought to save his foes,
Forgets not now to help a friend at need:
He soon perceives the grudging thoughts of those
That were mislikers of this woman's deed,
And mildly doth rebuke them for their sin,
With praise of her that did the work begin. . . .

'The poor may be relievëd when you will,—
No want of them the earth doth ever find;
But me you shall not have amongst you still:
The work's now done that heaven had erst assigned;
And she that knew I shortly hence must go,
Against my burial did this cost bestow.

'Of truth, therefore, I say, in each place where
The world's redemption shall be preached or taught,
This woman's zeal shall be related there
In memory of what she now hath wrought:
Great love shall surely reap a great reward;
Heaven does the heart, not outward shows, regard.'

JOHN BULLOKAR.

'Thirty pieces of Silver'

JUDAS, the slave of gain, resolves to sell
His most inestimable Lord; whom he
Should rather keep, his thrifty soul to fill
With all the riches of eternity:
But avarice his heart doth so bewitch
That he will sell heaven only to be rich.

His chapmen are the priests; for they who had
Betrayed the house of God to merchandise,
Will make no scruple to extend their trade
And count God saleable. But in the price
They thrifty are, and beat their market low:
But thirty silver pieces they'll bestow.

But thou, improvident Judas, since thou art
Resolved to sell a thing whose value is
Beyond the power of arithmetic art
To reckon up; proportionate thy price
In some more near degree: let thy demand
Make buyers, who this Christ is, understand.

Ask all the gold that rolls on Indus' shore,
Ask all the treasures of the Eastern Sea,
Ask all the earth's yet undiscovered ore,
Ask all the gems and pearls which purest be,
Ask Herod's 'chequer, ask the high priest's crown,
Ask Caesar's mighty sceptre and his throne.

Ask all the silver of the glistering stars,
Ask all the gold that flames in Phoebus' eyes,
Ask all the jewels of Aurora's tears,
Ask all the smiles and beauties of the skies,
  Ask all that can by any thing be given:
  Ask bliss, ask life, ask paradise, ask heaven.

Urge him no more with sense and reason; he
Resolves to traffic with the priests; for now
No other god but money he can see—
He nothing sees at all, and cares not how
  He makes his bargain with them, so he may
  Have but this wretched sum in ready pay.

And now the chink of his adorëd coin
Sounds in his purse, the traitor hastes to be
As good 's his wicked word, and is in pain
Till he bring forth his hired treachery:
  He thinks it an unworthy odious crime
  To cheat the priests, who thus had trusted him.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT
(Selected stanzas).

THE LAST SUPPER

The Upper Room

THE feast of sweet bread now was hard at hand,
  And spotless paschal lambs were marked to die:
When Christ's disciples came to understand
Their Master's will in this solemnity:
  'Where wilt thou,' say they, 'we prepare for thee
  The Passover, that now must eaten be?'

THE LAST SUPPER

Straight blessëd Peter readiest to obey,
And John, whom Jesus always held most dear,
Are callëd for, and sent without delay,
To make provision for this heavenly cheer:
  Receiving by their Lord's directing care,
  A sign that showed them where they should prepare.

'You two,' saith Christ, 'shall now this task begin
At yonder town, where you shall surely meet
A man, all soon as you are entered in,
Bearing a pot of water through the street;
  Him follow, wheresoever he doth go,
  What house he enters, enter you also.

'Ask of the owner for some place, where I,
With my disciples, may this supper eat;
And he, I know, will show you by and by,
A parlour room, well pavëd, fair and great,
  Which will be fit: make ready there for me.
  For there shall this last supper eaten be.'

O happy feast held by a heavenly King,
Where bread of life with bounty was bestowed:
No more a type, but now a figured thing,
True rock, whence pure sin-cleansing waters flowed:
  Sweet antidote, whose virtue sets man free
  From deadly surfeit of forbidden tree.

JOHN BULLOKAR.

The Beloved Disciple

EARTH was thy heaven, thy Saviour's breast thee bore:
Earth gave thee this: and what could heaven give more?

HENRY CLIFFORD, EARL OF CUMBERLAND.

The Sop

IT was no enemy which did this wrong,
But one who held with him communion sweet;
Chosen and trusted, taught and cherished long—
Had he not humbly stooped to wash his feet?
This was the man! and now the hour was nigh;
And Judas, who betrayed, said, 'Master, is it I?'. . .

But when from out the dish the sop he drew
Which to the traitor his dark soul betrayed;
All bitterness from all the herbs that grew
Since man lost paradise, that sop conveyed.
The bruisëd palms of more than mortal death
Combine to furnish forth the Saviour's haroseth!

ANON. (1856).

'This is my body'

HE was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what that Word did make it,
I do believe and take it.

ANON. (16th Cent.?).

haroseth] the sauce into which the sop was dipped.

'This do in remembrance of me'

WAS 't not enough to lose thy breath
And blood by an accursëd death,
But thou must also leave
To us, that did bereave
Thee of them both, these seals, the means
That should both cleanse
And keep us so,
Who wrought thy woe!
O rose of Sharon! O the lily
Of the valley!
How art thou now, thy flock to keep,
Become both food and shepherd to thy sheep.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'And there arose . . . a contention among them . . .'

BUT shadow deepens now toward the close:
His spirit darkens with the coming doom,
While they, in whom his heart had found repose
Of sympathy in good, fold close the gloom;
For he who pours his very being forth
Divinely rich and pure for these, must hear
These even now, so nigh the end, in wrath
Dispute pre-eminence: while, deadly near,
Looms Peter's base denial,—each one's broken troth!

HON. RODEN B. W. NOEL.

'A new commandment I give unto you . . .'

LOVE as he loved! How can we soar so high?
He can add wings, when he commands to fly.
Nor should we be with this command dismayed;
He that examples gives, will give his aid;
For he took flesh, that where his precepts fail,
His practice, as a pattern, may prevail. . . .

Love as he loved! A love so unconfined,
With arms extended, would embrace mankind.
Self-love would cease, or be dilated, when
We should behold as many selfs as men;
All of one family, in blood allied—
His precious blood, that for our ransom died.

EDMUND WALLER.

Purse and Scrip

GIVE me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer;
No other balm will there be given;
Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,
Travelleth towards the land of heaven:
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains:

There will I kiss
The bowl of bliss;
And drink mine everlasting fill
Upon every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before;
But, after, it will thirst no more.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

'In my Father's house are many mansions'

GAZE but upon the house where man embowers:
With flowers and rushes pavëd is his way;
Where all the creatures are his servitours:
The winds do sweep his chambers every day,
And clouds do wash his rooms; the ceiling gay,
Starrëd aloft, the gilded knobs embrave:
If such a house God to another gave,
How shine those glittering courts he for himself will have!

GILES FLETCHER.

'I go to prepare a place for you'

WHAT a high favour 's this,
That God should be man's harbinger to bliss!
When John prepared the way before thy face,
O Christ, 'twas no small grace
Unto the Baptist then;
Much greater dost thou now bestow on men,
In that thou goest before to make us room
In heaven against we come.

THOMAS WASHBOURNE.

embrave] adorn.

'That where I am, there ye may be also'

TARRY no longer; toward thine heritage
Haste on thy way, and be of right good cheer.
Go each day onward on thy pilgrimage;
Think how short time thou shalt abidë here.
Thy place is bigg'd above the sterrës clear,
None earthly palace wrought in so stately wise.
Come on, my friend, my brother most entere!
For thee I offered my blood in sacrifice.

JOHN LYDGATE.

'I am the way, and the truth, and the life'

'YOU never attained to him.' 'If to attain
Be to abide, then that may be.'
'Endless the way, followed with how much pain!'
'The way was he.'

ALICE MEYNELL.

'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me'

A STRANGER here, as all my fathers were
That went before, I wander to and fro;
From earth to heaven is my pilgrimage,
A tedious way for flesh and blood to go.
O thou that art the way, pity the blind
And teach me how I may thy dwelling find.

ANON. (J. Amner's *Sacred Hymns*, 1615).

bigg'd] built. entere] entirely, wholly.

'He shall give you another Comforter'

FOUNTAIN of sweets! Eternal Dove!
Which leav'st thy glorious perch above,
And hovering down, vouchsafest thus
To make thy nest below with us.

Soft as thy softest feathers, may
We find thy love to us to-day;
And in the shelter of thy wing
Obtain thy leave and grace to sing.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

'We will . . . make our abode with him'

TURN in, my Lord, turn in to me,
My heart 's a homely place;
But thou canst make corruption flee,
And fill it with thy grace:
So furnishëd it will be brave,
And a rich dwelling thou shalt have.

ANON. (Christ Church MS. 17th Cent.).

'My peace I give unto you'

CLOSE now thine eyes, and rest secure;
Thy soul is safe enough; thy body sure;
He that loves thee, he that keeps
And guards thee, never slumbers, never sleeps.

The smiling conscience in a sleeping breast
Has only peace, has only rest:
The music and the mirth of kings
Are all but very discords, when she sings:
Then close thine eyes and rest secure;
No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

'*As the world giveth*'

WE wither from our youth, we gasp away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly cursed.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

'*Not as the world giveth, give I unto you*'

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked any thing.

'A guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here:'
Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.'
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.

GEORGE HERBERT.

'I am the true vine'

MOST blessëd Vine!
Whose juice so good
I feel as wine,
But thy fair branches felt as blood;
How wert thou pressed
To be my feast!
In what deep anguish
Didst thou languish,
What springs of sweat and blood did drown thee!
How in one path
Did the full wrath
Of thy great Father
Crowd and gather,
Doubling thy griefs, when none would own thee!

HENRY VAUGHAN.

'Every branch . . . that beareth not fruit he taketh away'

WHEN the leaves in autumn wither
With a tawny tannëd face,
Warped and wrinkled up together,
The year's late beauty to disgrace;
There thy life's glass may'st thou find thee:
Green now, grey now, gone anon,
Leaving, worldling, of thine own
Neither fruit nor leaf behind thee.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

'But now they have both seen and hated . . .'

SEEN? and yet hated thee? they did not see,
They saw thee not, that saw and hated thee:
No, no, they saw thee not, O Life, O Love,
Who saw aught in thee that their hate could move.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'The hour cometh . . . that ye shall be scattered'

ALL that in world is written of me
Shall be fulfilled for knight or knave:
I am the herd, the sheep are ye,
And when the herd shall harmës have,
The flock shall be full fain to flee,
And succour seek, themselves to save.

YORK MIRACLE PLAY.

'And when they had sung an hymn . . .'

SO down the silver streams of Eridan,
On either side banked with a lily wall,
Whiter than both, rides the triumphant swan,
And sings his dirge, and prophesies his fall,
Diving into his watery funeral.
But Eridan to Kedron must submit
His flowery shore; nor can he envy it
If, when Apollo sings, his swans do silent sit.

That heavenly voice I more delight to hear,
Than gentle airs to breathe; or swelling waves
Against the sounding rocks their bosoms tear;
Or whistling reeds, that rutty Jordan laves
And with their verdure his white head embraves;
To chide the winds; or hiving bees that fly
About the laughing blooms of sallowie,
Rocking asleep the idle grooms that lazy lie.

And yet, how can I hear thee singing go,
When men incensed with hate thy death foreset?
Or else, why do I hear thee sighing so,
When thou, inflamed with love, their life dost get,
That love and hate, and sighs and songs are met?
But thus, and only thus, thy love did crave
To send thee singing for us to thy grave,
While we sought thee to kill, and thou sought'st us to save.

GILES FLETCHER.

Eridan] river Po. to breathe] breathing. embraves] adorns. to chide the winds] the winds chiding. sallowie] sallows. grooms] shepherds.

The Mount of Olives

THAT sacred hill, whose head full high,
Adorned with fruitful olives all around,
Is, as it were for endless memory
Of that dear Lord who oft thereon was found,
For ever with a flowering garland crowned.

EDMUND SPENSER.

DESPISED AND REJECTED

And look at last how, of most wretched wights,
He taken was, betrayed, and false accused;
How with most scornful taunts, and fell despites
He was reviled, disgraced, and foul abusèd,
How scourged, how crowned, how buffeted, how bruised.

EDMUND SPENSER.

IN THE GARDEN

Gethsemane

WHENAS kind Christ with his disciples went
Unto the farm-house of Gethsemane;
And feeling heaps of sorrow and lament
Afflict his heart, like to the troubled sea,
Forth wends he with three followers for to pray,
The rest he willed them there awhile to stay.

But when he felt no measure of his moan,
'My soul,' saith he, 'is heavy unto death;
Then stay, my friends, for I will walk alone,
But watch and pray while you enjoy your breath.'
So forth he went, and flat upon his face
With piteous plaints implored his Father's grace.

Long lay he feeding on his woeful languish,
And in his cries redoubled oft the same:
At last, forgetting of his baleful anguish,
He rose, and straight to his disciples came,
Who, through their cares and piteous tears there wept,
Without suspect of harms securely slept.

But he, the careful shepherd of his flock,
Seeing the day of dangers near at hand,—
The foe of man prepared his sheep to yoke,—
With tender care their mischiefs did withstand;
And waking them, he said upon that stour:
'What! can you not keep watch with me one hour?

stour] occasion.

'O watch and pray; temptations are too nigh;
The spirit wills, and yet the flesh says, nay.'
With that the tears of pity forth did fly:
O words and tears which mercy did bewray!
And now the second charge approacheth on,
And, pensive, Christ alone to pray is gone.

The hosts of heaven were movëd with his moan,
Whilst he with tears his Father's grace implores;
And every period was a bitter groan—
Even thus the Son of God his Lord adores:
'O Father, if thou wilt, remove from me
This cup: if not, thy will fulfillëd be.'

Herewith th' imperial gates of heaven began
To open wide, and from the brightsome throne
Of him who ruled the world, and fashioned man,
An angel bright with waving wings is gone,
And there alights, whereas the God of light
Lay quite dismayed, and robbed of all delight.

He gathered his distempered sprites in one,
Whilst that the angel whispered in his ear
His Father's will: then lifts he up anon
His reverend head, and 'gan his eyes to clear;
And forth he walks, and at the beck again
The angel parts, and hasteth thence amain.

Arrivëd there where his disciples lay,
He found them sleeping through their cares forepast,
And thus bespake: 'Why sleep you? rise and pray;
For why? temptations do approach us fast.'
His pensive train were whist, and could not tell
How to excuse the sloth in them did dwell.

Again from them unto his prayer he goes,
Loosing the fountains of his eyes at large;
His restless limbs upon the earth he throws,
And thus with sighs his prayers he doth discharge:
'O Father, look, look, Father, on my sheep,
That thou hast lent thy pensive Son to keep.'

Here ceased his tears and prayers: for why? the hour
Of grief and death approachëd near at hand;
So forth he hastes upon that hapless stour,
And found his followers sleeping on the land:
'Sleep hardly,' saith he, 'take your ease at will,
The hour is come of sorrow and of ill.

'The Son of Man already is betrayed
To sinners' hands: arise, and let us go.'
With that, with hearts appalled and quite dismayed,
They all arose to tend the hour of woe;
Whilst traitorous Judas with his train appears,
Armëd with staves, with clubs and warlike spears.

ANON. (1601)
(Selected stanzas).

The Betrayal

'*Cometh Judas . . . and with him a great multitude*'

JUDAS, that treason harboured in his breast,
Knew well that here our Lord did oft resort
Unto this place. Knowledge had wrought thy rest
If all in time thou wouldst have found comfort,
But, murderous wretch, this only did thee good:
Thou thirsty wert after the innocent blood.

stour] occasion.

O wretched man, bereft of inward peace,
Comest thou armed with weapons and with lights?
A cut-throat crew serve for thy shame's increase:
Are these thy mates? belike fear thee affrights.
A guilty conscience brings a restless grief,
Easeless in ease, finding no sound relief.

Forward they march, bringing along their light,
Their lanterns that a little light contain,
With other helps to guide them in the night;
Using the less, and from the great refrain:
To dim that light each one doth now prepare;
For Light of world no whit at all they care.

Christ, knowing well the secrets of mankind,
This instant somewhat should to him betide,
Forward he goeth against the crew unkind,
From whom he could have parted clean unspied:
'Whom do ye seek?' said he; 'to me now tell.'
'Jesus of Nazareth,' said they, and down they fell.

GERVASE MARKHAM.

'Hail, Master!'

SO Judas kissed his master,
And cried, 'All hail!' whenas he meant all harm.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

'Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?'

'JUDAS, dost thou betray me with a kiss?
Canst thou find hell about my lips, and miss
Of life just at the gates of life and bliss?'

GEORGE HERBERT.

Malchus' Ear

WELL, Peter, dost thou wield thy active sword;
Well for thyself, I mean, not for thy Lord:
To strike at ears, is to take heed there be
No witness, Peter, of thy perjury.

RICHARD CRASHAW

'Put up thy sword into the sheath'

READY to go to prison and to death!
Be still, and check awhile thy high desires;
Put up again thy sword within its sheath;
One little thing alone thy Lord requires,—
Not to deny him at a woman's breath.

ISAAC WILLIAMS.

Jesus Bound

O WOULD they bind him never to depart,
The strongest chain were love, to hold the heart;
Or, happy they, could they so happy prove,
Themselves to be ta'en captive by his love.

JOHN HODDESDON.

'And they all forsook him and fled'

WHEN thou wast taken, Lord, I oft have read,
All thy disciples thee forsook, and fled.
Let their example not a pattern be
For me to fly, but now to follow thee.

ROBERT HERRICK.

BEFORE THE RULERS

In the High Priest's House

Before Caiaphas

O ALL ye who pass by, whose eyes and mind
To worldly things are sharp, but to me blind—
To me, who took eyes that I might you find:
Was ever grief like mine?

The priests and rulers all false witness seek
Gainst him who seeks not life, but is the meek
And ready paschal lamb of this great week:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then they accuse me of great blasphemy,
That I did thrust into the Deity,
Who never thought that any robbery:
Was ever grief like mine?

Some said that I the temple to the floor
In three days razed, and raisëd as before:
Why, he that built the world can do much more:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then they condemn me all, with that same breath
Which I do give them daily, unto death;
Thus Adam my first breathing rendereth:
Was ever grief like mine?

Behold, they spit on me in scornful wise;
Who by my spittle gave the blind man eyes,
Leaving his blindness to mine enemies:
Was ever grief like mine?

My face they cover, though it be divine:
As Moses' face was veilëd, so is mine,
Lest on their double-dark souls either shine:
Was ever grief like mine?

Servants and abjects flout me; they are witty:
'Now prophesy who strikes thee,' is their ditty.
So they in me deny themselves all pity:
Was ever grief like mine?

GEORGE HERBERT
(Selected stanzas).

In the Servants' Quarters

'MAN, you too, aren't you, one of these rough followers
of the criminal?
All hanging hereabout to gather how he 's going to bear
Examination in the hall.' She flung disdainful glances on
The shabby figure standing at the fire with others there,
Who warmed them by its flare.

'No indeed, my skipping maiden: I know nothing of the
trial here,
Or criminal, if so he be.—I chanced to come this way,
And the fire shone out into the dawn, and morning airs
are cold now;
I, too, was drawn in part by charms I see before me play,
That I see not every day.'

'Ha, ha!' then laughed the constables who also stood to warm themselves,
The while another maiden scrutinized his features hard,
As the blaze threw into contrast every line and knot that wrinkled them,
Exclaiming, 'Why, last night when he was brought in by the guard,
You were with him in the yard!'

'Nay, nay, you teasing wench, I say! You know you speak mistakenly.
Cannot a tired pedestrian who has footed it afar
Here on his way from northern parts, engrossed in humble marketings,
Come in and rest awhile, although judicial doings are
Afoot by morning star?'

'O, come, come!' laughed the constables. 'Why, man, you speak the dialect
He uses in his answers; you can hear him up the stairs.
So own it. We sha'n't hurt ye. There he's speaking now! His syllables
Are those you sound yourself when you are talking unawares,
As this pretty girl declares.'

'And you shudder when his chain clinks!' she rejoined. 'O yes, I noticed it.
And you winced, too, when those cuffs they gave him echoed to us here.
They'll soon be coming down, and you may then have to defend yourself
Unless you hold your tongue, or go away and keep you clear
When he's led to judgement near!'

'No! I'll be damned in hell if I know anything about the man!
No single thing about him more than everybody knows!
Must not I even warm my hands but I am charged with
blasphemies?'
—His face convulses as the morning cock that moment
crows,
And he stops, and turns, and goes.

THOMAS HARDY.

'The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter'

THE Saviour looked on Peter. Ay, no word,
No gesture of reproach! the heavens serene,
Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean
Their thunders that way! the forsaken Lord
Looked only, on the traitor. None record
What that look was, none guess: for those who have seen
Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,
Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,
Have missed Jehovah at the judgement-call.
And Peter, from the height of blasphemy—
'I never knew this man'—did quail and fall,
As knowing straight that God,—and turnëd free
And went out speechless from the face of all,
And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Peter's Sorrow

AT sorrow's door I knocked, they craved my name;
I answered, 'One unworthy to be known.'
'What one?' say they. 'One worthiest of blame.'
'But who?' 'A wretch, not God's nor yet his own.'
'A man?' 'Oh no, a beast, much worse.' 'What creature?'
'A rock.' 'How called?' 'The rock of scandal, Peter.'

'From whence?' 'From Caiaphas' house.' 'Ah, dwell you there?'
'Sin's farm I rented there, but now would leave it.'
'What rent?' 'My soul.' 'What gain?' 'Unrest and fear.'
'Dear purchase!' 'Ah, too dear, will you receive it?'
'What shall we give?' 'Fit tears, and times to plain me.'
'Come in!' say they. Thus griefs did entertain me.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

The Play

'And Herod and Pilate became friends that very day'

MARK how they sport with him, these lordly men:
By Judas first he's tossed to Annas, then
From Annas quick to Caiaphas he's thrown,
From Caiaphas to Pilate next, and when
By Pilate flung to Herod as his own,
Back is he cast to Pilate once again:
They grow quite friendly keeping Christ in play,
But what, I wonder, will the Umpire say?—
Sure they'll be 'Out' when comes the Judgement Day.

ANON.

Before Herod

DISMISSED by Pilate, see thy most just Judge
From this judge most unjust, led to a king
Much more unjust. Lo, how he's forced to trudge
Through thick and thin! hark how their clamours ring
About his ears! and see the people flock
To see whereat to wonder, gaze, and mock!

To Herod come, that long had longed to see him,
See now (as if some juggler he had been,
That would show tricks to all men that would fee him)
How he provokes him some trick to begin:
But, for he silent stands and thwarts his mind,
He holds him but a fool, and fool unkind. . . .

How mute was he among so many lies,
Loud lies, God wot, brayed out by his accusers!
How still, meek Lamb, among so many cries
Of foul-mouthed hounds, his hunters and abusers!
In few, he showed so many gifts of grace,
That men might clearly see God in his face.

JOHN DAVIES OF HEREFORD.

Before Pilate

'*And he answered them nothing*'

O MIGHTY nothing! unto thee,
Nothing, we owe all things that be.
God spake when first he all things made,
He saved all, when he nothing said.
The world was made of nothing then;
'Tis made by nothing now again.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

'Crucify him!'

FRAIL multitude? whose giddy law is list,
And best applause is windy flattering;
Most like the breath of which it doth consist,
No sooner blown but as soon vanishing,
As much desired as little profiting;
That makes the men that have it oft as light
As those that give it; which the proud invite,
And fear: the bad man's friend, the good man's hypocrite.

It was but now their sounding clamours sung,
'Blessëd is he that comes from the Most High!'
And all the mountains with 'Hosanna!' rung;
And now, 'Away with him—away!' they cry,
And nothing can be heard but 'Crucify!'
It was but now, the crown itself they save,
And golden name of King unto him gave;
And now, no king, but only Caesar, they will have:

It was but now they gathered blooming may,
And of his arms disrobed the branching tree
To strow with boughs and blossoms all thy way
And now, the branchless trunk a cross for thee,
And may, dis-mayed, thy coronet must be:
It was but now they were so kind to throw
Their own best garments where thy feet should go,
And now, thyself they strip, and bleeding wounds they show.

GILES FLETCHER.

list] as it pleases.

may dis-mayed] the flowers being plucked, the thorns left.

'Pilate . . . took water, and washed his hands'

NOW Pilate thou art proved a painted wall,
A golden sepulchre with rotten bones;
From right to wrong, from equity to fall:
If none upbraid thee, yet the very stones
Will rise against thee, and in question call
His blood, his tears, his sighs, his bitter groans:
All these will witness at the latter day,
When water cannot wash thy sin away.

ÆMELIA LANYER.

'But Jesus he scourged, and delivered to be crucified'

AH, how they scourge me! yet my tenderness
Doubles each lash: and yet their bitterness
Winds up my grief to a mysteriousness:
Was ever grief like mine?

And now I am delivered unto death;
Which each one calls for so with utmost breath,
That he before me well-nigh suffereth:
Was ever grief like mine?

The soldiers lead me to the common hall:
There they deride me, they abuse me all;
Yet for twelve heavenly legions I could call:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then with a scarlet robe they me array,
Which shows my blood to be the only way
And cordial left to repair man's decay:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then on my head a crown of thorns I wear;
For these are all the grapes Sion doth bear,
Though I my vine planted and watered there:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then with the reed they gave to me before
They strike my head, the rock from whence all store
Of heavenly blessings issue evermore:
Was ever grief like mine?

They bow their knees to me, and cry, 'Hail, King!'
Whatever scoffs or scornfulness can bring,
I am the floor, the sink, where they it fling:
Was ever grief like mine?

The soldiers also spit upon that face
Which angels did desire to have the grace,
And prophets, once to see, but found no place:
Was ever grief like mine?

Thus trimmëd forth they bring me to the rout,
Who 'Crucify him!' cry with one strong shout.
God holds his peace at man, and man cries out:
Was ever grief like mine?

They lead me in once more, and putting then
Mine own clothes on, they lead me out again.
Whom devils fly, thus is he tossed of men:
Was ever grief like mine?

O, all ye who pass by, behold and see:
Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the tree—
The tree of life to all but only me:
Was ever grief like mine?

GEORGE HERBERT
(Selected stanzas).

Put off thy Robe

PUT off thy robe of purple, then go on
To the sad place of execution:
Thine hour is come; and the tormentor stands
Ready to pierce thy tender feet and hands.
Long before this, the base, the dull, the rude,
Th' inconstant, and unpurgëd multitude
Yawn for thy coming; some, ere this time, cry,
'How he defers, how loth he is to die!'
Amongst this scum, the soldier, with his spear,
And that sour fellow, with his vinegar,
His sponge and stick, do ask why thou dost stay.
So do the scurf and bran too. Go thy way,
Thy way, thou guiltless man, and satisfy
By thine approach, each their beholding eye.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Highway to Calvary

SO from Jerusalem
The soul's physician goes,
When they forsook his saving health,
And vowed themselves his foes.

Behold what multitudes
Do guard thy God about,
Who bleeding bears his dying tree
Amidst the Jewish rout:

Centurion hard at hand,
The thieves upon the side,
The exclamations, shouts, and cries,
The shame he doth abide.

Then press amongst the throng,
Thyself in sorrow's weed;
Get very near to Christ, and see
What tears the women shed.

Then look toward Jesus' load,
More than he could endure,
And how for help to bear the same
A hireling they procure.

Join thou unto the cross;
Bear it of love's desire;
Do not as Cyrenaeus did,
That took it up for hire.

It is a grateful deed
If willing underta'en;
But if compulsion set a-work,
The labour 's done in vain.

Up to Mount Calvary
If thou desir'st to go,
Then take thy cross, and follow Christ,
Thou canst not miss it so.

SAMUEL ROWLANDS
(Selected stanzas).

Christ's Words, going to the Cross

HAVE, have ye no regard, all ye
Who pass this way, to pity me,
Who am a man of misery?

A man both bruised, and broke, and one
Who suffers not here for mine own,
But for my friends' transgression!

Ah! Sion's daughters, do not fear
The cross, the cords, the nails, the spear,
The myrrh, the gall, the vinegar:

For Christ, your loving Saviour, hath
Drunk up the wine of God's fierce wrath;
Only, there 's left a little froth,

Less for to taste, than for to show,
What bitter cups had been your due,
Had he not drank them up for you.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

THRICE happy women! that obtained such grace
From him whose worth the world could not contain,
Immediately to turn about his face,
As not remembering his great grief and pain,
To comfort you, whose tears poured forth apace
On Flora's banks, like showers of April's rain:
Your cries enforcëd mercy, grace, and love,
From him whom greatest princes could not move

To speak one word, nor once to lift his eyes;
Unto proud Pilate—no, nor Herod, king,
By all the questions that they could devise,
Could make him answer to no manner of thing;
Yet these poor women, by their piteous cries,
Did move their Lord, their lover, and their king,
To take compassion, turn about and speak
To them whose hearts were ready now to break.

ÆMELIA LANYER.

CRUCIFIED

The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

A power from the unknown God,
  A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
  The thorns of death and shame.
  A mortal shape to him
  Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

CALVARY

'And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh'

'FILL high the bowl, and spice it well, and pour
The dews oblivious: for the cross is sharp,
The cross is sharp, and he
Is tenderer than a lamb.

'He wept by Lazarus' grave—how will he bear
This bed of anguish?—and his pale weak form
Is worn with many a watch
Of sorrow and unrest.

'His sweat last night was as great drops of blood;
And the sad burthen pressed him so to earth
The very torturers paused
To help him on his way.

'Fill high the bowl, benumb his aching sense
With medicined sleep.'—O awful in thy woe!
The parching thirst of death
Is on thee, and thou triest

The slumberous potion bland, and wilt not drink:
Not sullen, nor in scorn, like haughty man
With suicidal hand
Putting his solace by:

But as at first thine all-pervading look
Saw from thy Father's bosom to the abyss,
Measuring in calm presage
The infinite descent;

So to the end, though now of mortal pangs
Made heir, and emptied of thy glory awhile,
With unaverted eye
Thou meetest all the storm.

JOHN KEBLE

'And they crucified him'

LO, here I hang, charged with a world of sin,
The greater world o' the two; for that came in
By words, but this by sorrow I must win:
Was ever grief like mine?

Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound,—
Reproaches, which are free, while I am bound:
Was ever grief like mine?

Betwixt two thieves I spend my utmost breath,
As he that for some robbery suffereth;
Alas! what have I stolen from you? death:
Was ever grief like mine?

A king my title is, prefixed on high,
Yet by my subjects am condemned to die
A servile death in servile company:
Was ever grief like mine?

They part my garments, and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cured those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes:
Was ever grief like mine?

'Now heal thyself, Physician; now come down.'
Alas! I did so, when I left my crown
And Father's smile, for you, to feel his frown:
Was ever grief like mine?

But, O my God, my God! why leav'st thou me,
The Son, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God ——
Never was grief like mine.

GEORGE HERBERT
(Selected stanzas).

The Penitent Thief

'SAY, bold but blessëd thief,
That in a trice
Slipped into paradise,
And in plain day
Stol'st heaven away,
What trick couldst thou invent
To compass thy intent?
What arms?
What charms?'
'Love and belief.'

'Say, bold but blessëd thief,
How couldst thou read
A crown upon that head?
What text, what gloss—
A kingdom and a cross?

How couldst thou come to spy
God in a man to die?
What light?
What sight?'
'The sight of grief—

'I sight to God his pain;
And by that sight
I saw the light,
Thus did my grief
Beget relief.
And take this rule from me,
Pity thou him he'll pity thee.
Use this,
Ne'er miss,
Heaven may be stoln again.'

ANON. (Christ Church MS. 17th Cent.).

'*Woman, behold thy son*'

ALL under the leaves, and the leaves of life,
I met with virgins seven,
And one of them was Mary mild,
Our Lord's mother of heaven.

'O what are you seeking, you seven fair maids,
All under the leaves of life?
Come tell, come tell, what seek you
All under the leaves of life?'

sight] the old spelling of sigh, sighed, and sight; thus the play on the words.

'We 're seeking for no leaves, Thomas,
But for a friend of thine;
We're seeking for sweet Jesus Christ,
To be our guide and thine.'

'Go down, go down to yonder town,
And sit in the gallery,
And there you'll see sweet Jesus Christ
Nailed to a big yew-tree.'

So down they went to yonder town
As fast as foot could fall,
And many a grievous bitter tear
From the virgin's eyes did fall.

'O peace, Mother, O peace, Mother,
Your weeping doth me grieve;
I must suffer this,' he said,
'For Adam and for Eve.

'O Mother, take you John Evangelist
All for to be your son,
And he will comfort you sometimes,
Mother, as I have done.'

'O come thou, John Evangelist,
Thou'rt welcome unto me;
But more welcome my own dear son
Whom I nursed on my knee.'

Then he laid his head on his right shoulder,
Seeing death it struck him nigh,—
'The Holy Ghost be with your soul,
I die, Mother dear, I die.'

OLD CAROL.

'There was darkness over the whole land'

NOT to behold his great Creator's death,
The sun from sinful eyes hath veiled his light,
And faintly journeys up heaven's sapphire path;

And, cutting from her brows her tresses bright,
The moon doth keep her Lord's sad obsequies,
Impearling with her tears this robe of night.

All staggering and lazy lour the skies,
The earth and elemental stages quake,
The long-since dead from bursted graves arise.

And can things, wanting sense, yet sorrow take,
And bear a part with him who all them wrought,
And man, though born with cries, shall pity lack?

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

'One of the soldiers . . . pierced his side'

WHITE was his naked breast,
And red his bloody side,
Wan was his face fairèst,
His woundës deep and wide.

ANON. (15th Cent.).

Mary at the Cross

THIS blessëd babe that thou hast born,
His blessëd body is all to-torn,
To buy us again that were forlorn,
His head is crownëd with a thorn.
Mary mother, come and see
Thy sweet son nailëd on a tree.

CALVARY

'Crownëd, alas, with thorn or breer,
O why should my son thus hang here?
To me this is a carefull cheer;
Sweet son, think on thy mother dear.'
Mary mother, come and see
Thy sweet son nailëd on a tree.

'These wicked Jews with their falsehead,
Under their feet they gan him tread,
They wounded him through hand and head,
They left him not, till he was dead.'
Mary mother, come and see
Thy sweet son nailëd on a tree.

'Alas, alas, now may I cry,
Why might I not with my son die?
My heart is replenished with pity,
Full filled with pain most piteously.'
Mary mother, come and see
Thy sweet son nailëd on a tree.

Mary mother, grieve you not ill,
From heaven he came this to fulfil;
Because mankind should not spill,
He took his death with perfect good will.
Mary mother, come and see
Thy sweet son nailëd on a tree.

ANON. (16th Cent.).

spill] be spilt, destroyed.

'*It is finished*'

CALM, of old, the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
From the pilëd dark behind;
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail—
'Pan, Pan is dead.'

And the rowers from the benches
Fell,—each shuddering on his face—
While despairing influences
Struck a cold back through the place;
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—
'Pan, Pan is dead.'

And that dismal cry rose slowly
And sank slowly through the air,
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said—
'Pan is dead—Great Pan is dead—
Pan, Pan is dead.'

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
Hung for love's sake on a cross;
When his brow was chill with dying,
And his soul was faint with loss;
When his priestly blood dropped downward,
And his kingly eyes looked throneward—
Then, Pan was dead.

By the love he stood alone in,
His sole Godhead stood complete;
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat;
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan was dead. . . .

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice,
Whence libations ran of yore.
See! the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike—as your glories must,
Since Pan is dead.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

The Cross

OUR Saviour's cross, begilt with guiltless blood,
Was framed (as some write) of four kinds of wood,
Palm, cedar, cypress, olive; which might show
That blessings thence to the four parts should flow
Of the vast world, and from the four winds should
Christ's flock be fetched to his thrice-blessëd fold.

THOMAS BANCROFT.

The All-Loving

SO, the All-Great, were the All-loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself.

Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE SEPULCHRE

The Descent from the Cross

IS this the face that thrills with awe
  Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the face without a flaw,
  The face that is the face of love?
Yea, this defaced, a lifeless clod,
  Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
  This face the face of Jesus Christ.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

Drop, Drop, Slow Tears

DROP, drop, slow tears,
  And bathe those beauteous feet,
Which brought from heaven
  The news and Prince of peace:
Cease not, wet eyes,
  His mercies to intreat;

To cry for vengeance
  Sin doth never cease:
In your deep floods
  Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let his eye
  See sin, but through my tears.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

The Burial

'ARE these the eyes that made all others blind?
  Ah! why are they themselves now blemishëd?
Is this the face in which all beauty shined?
What blast hath thus his flowers debellishëd?
Are these the feet that on the watery head
  Of the unfaithful ocean passage found?
  Why go they now so lowly under ground
Washed with our worthless tears, and their own precious
    wound? . . .

'Thus spend we tears, that never can be spent,
On him, that sorrow now no more shall see;
Thus send we sighs, that never can be sent,
To him, that died to live and would not be,
To be there where he would. Here bury we
  This heavenly earth; here let it softly sleep—
  The fairest shepherd of the fairest sheep.'
So all the body kissed, and homeward went to weep.

debellishëd] opposite of embellished: ruined.

So home their bodies went, to seek repose,
But at the grave they left their souls behind.
O, who the force of love celestial knows,
That can the chains of nature's self unbind,
Sending the body home without the mind?
Ah, blessëd virgin! what high angel's art
Can ever count thy tears, or sing thy smart,
When every nail that pierced his hand, did pierce thy heart? . . .

So when the lark, poor bird! afar espi'th
Her yet unfeathered children (whom to save
She strives in vain) slain by the fatal scythe,
Which from the meadow her green locks doth shave,
That their warm nest is now become their grave;
The woeful mother up to heaven springs,
And all about her plaintive notes she flings,
And their untimely fate most pitifully sings.

GILES FLETCHER.

'*A new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid*'

HOW life and death in thee
Agree!
Thou hadst a virgin womb,
And tomb.
A Joseph did betroth
Them both.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Now sleeps the Lord

NOW lies the Lord in a most quiet bed.
Stillness profound
Steeps like a balm the wounded body wholly,
More still than the hushed night brooding around.
The moon is overhead,
Sparkling and small, and somewhere a faint sound
Of water dropping in a cistern slowly.
Now lies the Lord in a most quiet bed.

Now rests the Lord in perfect loneliness.
One little grated window has the tomb,
A patch of gloom
Impenetrable, where the moonbeams whiten
And arabesque its wall
With leafy shadows, light as a caress.
The palms that brood above the garden brighten,
But in that quiet room
Darkness prevails, deep darkness fills it all.
Now rests the Lord in perfect loneliness.

Now sleeps the Lord secure from human sorrow.
The sorrowing women sometimes fall asleep
Wrapped in their hair,
Which while they slumber yet warm tears will steep,
Because their hearts mourn in them ceaselessly.
Uprising, half-aware,
They myrrh and spices and rich balms, put by
For their own burials, gather hastily,
Dreaming it is that morrow
When they the precious body may prepare.
Now sleeps the Lord secure from human sorrow.

Now sleeps the Lord unhurt by love's betrayal.
Peter sleeps not,
He lies yet on his face and has not stirred
Since the iron entered in his soul red-hot.
The disciples trembling mourn their disillusion,
That he whose word
Could raise the dead, on whom God had conferred
Power, as they trusted, to redeem Isràel,
Had been that bitter day put to confusion,
Crucified and interred.
Now sleeps the Lord unhurt by love's betrayal.

Now rests the Lord, crowned with ineffable peace.
Have they not peace to-night who feared him, hated
And hounded to his doom,
The red thirst of their vengeance being sated?
No, they still run about and bite the beard,
Confer, nor cease
To tease the contemptuous Pilate, are affeared
Still of him tortured, crushed, humiliated,
Cold in a blood-stained tomb.
Now rests the Lord crowned with ineffable peace.

Now lies the Lord serene, august, apart,
That mortal life his mother gave him ended.
No word save one
Of Mary more, but gently as a cloud
On her perdurable silence has descended.
Hush! In her heart
Which first felt the faint life stir in her son,

Perchance is apprehended
Even now dimly new mystery, grief less loud
Clamours, the Resurrection has begun.
Now lies the Lord serene, august, apart.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

The Watch at the Sepulchre

THERE is nothing more that they can do
For all their rage and boast;
Caiaphas with his blaspheming crew,
Herod with his host,

Pontius Pilate in his judgement-hall
Judging their Judge and his,
Or he who led them all and passed them all,
Arch-Judas with his kiss.

The sepulchre made sure with ponderous stone,
Seal that same stone, O priest;
It may be thou shalt block the holy one
From rising in the east:

Set a watch about the sepulchre
To watch on pain of death;
They must hold fast the stone if one should stir
And shake it from beneath.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

'Then Judas . . . brought back the thirty pieces of silver . . .'

JUDAS:

TAKE thou this money, Caiaphas,
I pray thee now for shame, whereas
Thou hast betrayed me; I, alas,
My Master dear betrayed.

CAIAPHAS:

Much gold to many paid I when
I was made priest, to many men;
To thee for Christ but pieces ten
Of silver thrice I paid.

PILATE:

One came and begged his body here
To lay it in a sepulchre;
I granted freely his desire,
And they have buried him.

HEROD:

It is great marvel he is dead;
Three years ago he came and said
That he went up to lay his head
Within Jerusalem.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON.

'And he went away and hanged himself'

THE graceless traitor round about did look
(He looked not long, the devil quickly met him)
To find a halter, which he found, and took;
Only a gibbet now he needs must get him;
So on a withered tree he fairly set him,
And helped him fit the rope, and in his thought
A thousand furies with their whips he brought.
So there he stands, ready to hell to make his vault. . . .

Such horrid gorgons, and misformëd forms
Of damnëd fiends, flew dancing in his heart,
That, now unable to endure their storms,
'Fly, fly,' he cries, 'thyself, whate'er thou art,
Hell, hell already burns in every part.'
So down into his torturer's arms he fell,
That ready stood his funerals to yell,
And in a cloud of night to waft him quick to hell.

GILES FLETCHER.

The Potter's Field

THEY buy a field to bury strangers in,
Yet with the first two such will not begin.
True, Judas, though new to Jerusalem,
Is too much like them to be strange to them.
But since for Christ a place they will not find—
They will not find one stranger to their mind.

ANON.

The Harrowing of Hell

CHRIST to hell he took the way
With woundës wide and all bloodỳ;
The foulë fiendës to affray
With him he bore the cross of tree.

There where the good souls did in dwell
They chained the gates, and barred them fast.
'Ah! now,' said Jesus, 'ye princes fell,
Open the gates that ever shall last.

'Now, in my Father's name of heaven,
Open the gatës against me!'
As light of light, and thunder flame,
The gates to-burst, and 'gan to flee.

'Ah ha!' said Adam, 'my God I see,
He that made me with his hand!'
'I see,' said Noah, 'where cometh he
That saved me both on water and land!'

Quoth David, 'We spoke of one so grim
That shouldë break the brazen gates;'
Quoth Zacherie, 'and his folk out win,
And leave there still those that he hates.'

Quoth Beelzebub, 'I barred full fast
The gates with lock, chain, bolt, and pin;
And with one word of his wind's blast
They broken up, and he came in.'

wind's] breath's.

Adam and Eve with him he took,
King David, Moses, and Solomon;
And harried hell in every nook,
Within it left he soulës none.

Thus 'comfited he the fiendës fell,
And took their prey that he had bought,
And put them in to endless weal—
Where joy and bliss fail nought.

(Arranged from two anonymous poems, 15th Cent.)

In Jerusalem

DAWNS leaden day: a grey
Wind moaning low;
Through empty street no feet
Echoing go;

Ways dank with breath of death,
All day in gloom
Drift grim, white-draped, escaped
Shapes from the tomb;

Men's doors fast-barred to guard
Living from dead;
Cold-cramped, each heart apart
Crazes with dread;

Ten thousand groan and own
Terror their guest;
One lying lone in stone
Only knows rest.

ANON.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

OUR Master lies asleep and is at rest:
His heart has ceased to bleed, his eye to weep:
The sun ashamed has dropped down in the west:
Our Master lies asleep.

Now we are they who weep, and trembling keep
Vigil, with wrung heart in a sighing breast,
While slow time creeps, and slow the shadows creep.

Renew thy youth, as eagle from the nest;
O Master, who hast sown, arise to reap:—
No cock-crow yet, no flush on eastern crest:
Our Master lies asleep.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

NOT HERE, BUT RISEN

I got me flowers to straw thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

GEORGE HERBERT.

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin;
And having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die,
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live for ever in felicity.

EDMUND SPENSER.

NOT HERE, BUT RISEN

'Early, while it was yet dark'

ALL night had shout of men and cry
Of woeful women filled his way;
Until that noon of sombre sky
On Friday, clamour and display
Smote him; no solitude had he,
No silence, since Gethsemane.

Public was death; but power, but might,
But life again, but victory,
Were hushed within the dead of night,
The shuttered dark, the secrecy.
And all alone, alone, alone
He rose again behind the stone.

ALICE MEYNELL.

Resurrection

SLEEP, sleep, old sun! thou canst not have repast,
As yet, the wound thou took'st on Friday last;
Sleep, then, and rest; the world may bear thy stay,
A better Sun rose bèfore thee to-day;
Who, not content t'enlighten all that dwell
On the earth's face, as thou, enlightened hell,
And made the dark fires languish in that vale,
As, at thy presence here, our fires grow pale;

Whose body having walked on earth, and now
Hasting to heaven, would, that he might allow
Himself unto all stations, and fill all,
For these three days become a mineral.
He was all gold when he lay down, but rose
All tincture, and doth not alone dispose
Leaden and iron wills to good, but is
Of power to make even sinful flesh like his.
Had one of those, whose credulous piety
Thought that a soul one might discern and see
Go from a body, at this sepulchre been,
And, issuing from the sheet, this body seen,
He would have justly thought this body a soul,
If not of any man, yet of the whole.

JOHN DONNE.

Mary Magdalene in the Garden

[HERE] to embalm his breathless corpse I came,
As once afore I did anoint his feet,
And to preserve the relics of the same,
The only remnant that my bliss did meet,
To weep afresh for him in depth of dole
That lately wept to him for mine own soul.

But lo, alas! I find the grave wide ope,
The body gone, the empty sindon left,
The hollow tomb I everywhere do grope
To be assured of what I am sure bereft;
The labour of embalming is prevented
But cause of endless weeping is augmented.

Most true it is that Peter came, and John
With me unto the tomb to try report,

NOT HERE, BUT RISEN

They came in haste, and hastily were gone,
They, having searched, dare make no more resort;
And what gained I? two witness of my loss,
Dismayers of my hope, cause of more cross.

O loving Lord, thou only didst defer
My consolation to increase it more,
That thy delightful presence might prefer
The better welcome, being wished so sore,
In that thy absence little hope had left
Unto my heart so long of bliss bereft.

I sought thee dead, pinned in a stony gaol,
But find thee living, and at liberty,
Shrined in a shroud, thy visage wan and pale,
Left as the model of all misery;
But now invest in glorious robes I find thee,
And as the president of bliss I mind thee.

As all this while I sought, but could not find,
Wept without comfort, called unanswered too,
So now thy coming satisfies my mind,
Thy triumphs please my tears, which long did woo;
And all my joys are hushed with this one word,
'Mary', 'cause sweetly spoken from my Lord.

Rapt with his voice, impatient of delay,
Out of his mouth his talk I greedily take,
And to this first and only word I say,
And with one other word this answer make,
'Rabboni';—then my joy my speech did choke,
I could no more proceed, nor more hear spoke.

ANON. (1604)
(Selected stanzas).

The Bribing of the Watch

[ALL] in the middle of the night
A mighty earthquake came,
Which shook the sea, likewise the land,
And all within the same.

A mighty angel of the Lord
Came down from heaven so high,
And rollëd back that mighty stone
From the grave where he did lie.

His face was like the flaming fire,
His garments white as snow,
Which put the watchmen in great fear,
They ran away full sore.

They went and told the high priest plain
That he should them release;
Who hirëd them with money, so
That they should hold their peace,

And say some of his servants came
(Whom he before did keep,)
And secretly stole him away
When they were fast asleep.

'And if King Herod should hear thereof,
We will persuade him so;
Thus you can have no harm at all
Which way soe'er you go.'

ANON. (Broadside, c. 1820).

The Walk to Emmaus

IT happened, on a solemn eventide,
Soon after he that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied, as they went,
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enriched them still the more;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appeared t' have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wondered he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them, with a kind engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged a share.
Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explained, illùstrated, and searched so well
The tender theme, on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, 'The night,' they said, 'is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.'
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And, made so welcome at their simple feast,

He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?'

WILLIAM COWPER.

'When the doors were shut . . . for fear of the Jews'

'ARE the gates sure? is every bolt made fast?
No dangerous whisper wandering through?
Dare we breathe calm, and, unalarmed, forecast
Our calls to suffer or to do?'
O ye of little faith! twelve hours ago,
He whom ye mourn, by power unbound
The bonds ye fear; nor sealëd stone below
Barred him, nor mailëd guards around.

The Lord is risen indeed! His own have seen—
They who denied,—have seen his face,
Weeping and spared. Shall loyal hearts not lean
Upon his outstretched arm of grace?
Shine in your orbs, ye stars of God's new heaven,
Or gathered or apart, shine clear!
Far, far beneath the opposing mists are driven,
The Invisible is waiting near.

JOHN KEBLE.

'My Lord and my God'

SPRING comes with silent rush of leaf
Across the earth, and cries,
'Lo, Love is risen!' But doubting Grief
Returns, 'If with mine eyes

'I may not see the marks, nor reach
My hand into his side,
I will not hear your lips that preach
Love raised and glorified.

'Except by all the wounds that brake
His heart, and marred his brow
Most grievously for sorrow's sake,
How shall I know him now?'

Love came, and said, 'Reach hither, Grief,
Thy hand into my side:
Oh, slow of heart to win belief,
Seeing that for grief I died.

'Lo, all the griefs of which I died
Rise with me from the dead!'
Then Grief drew near, and touched the side,
And touched the wounds that bled,

And cried, 'My God, O blessëd sign,
O Body raised, made whole,
By this I know that thou art mine,
Upholder of my soul!'

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

'I go a fishing'

THEY stood together by the sea
In trouble and perplexity;
The waves were breaking on the sand,
The winds were moaning o'er the land,
And life came back, like floating wrack,
On those dim shores of Galilee.

On every hill, 'neath every tree
Was some fond haunt of memory,
Where they had known the mystic force
Of healing might, or high discourse;
And at his will those waves were still
Upon the sea of Galilee.

But Peter nought can hear or see
Save that dark cross on Calvary,
The crowing cock, the certain maid;
'I go a fishing', then he said;
He could not bear the thoughts that were
Thick-crowding now in Galilee.

WALTER CHALMERS SMITH.

'Feed my lambs'

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;

Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
    Little lamb, who made thee?
    Dost thou know who made thee?

    Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
    Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callëd by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callëd by his name.
    Little lamb, God bless thee!
    Little lamb, God bless thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE.

'Tarry till I come'

FOR thee I wait, for thee I tarry still,
Mine eyes do long to gaze on thee my fill;
For thee I watch, for thee I pry and pore,
My soul for thee attendeth evermore.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE.

'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world'

THEY drift away. Ah, God! they drift for ever.
I watch the stream sweep onward to the sea,
Like some old battered buoy upon a roaring river,
Round whom the tide-waifs hang—then drift to sea.

I watch them drift—the old familiar faces,
Who fished and rode with me, by stream and wold,
Till ghosts, not men, fill old belovëd places,
And, ah! the land is rank with churchyard mould.

I watch them drift—the youthful aspirations,
Shores, landmarks, beacons, drift alike.

. . . . . .

Yet overhead the boundless arch of heaven
Still fades to night, still blazes into day.

. . . . . .

Ah, God! My God! Thou wilt not drift away!

CHARLES KINGSLEY
(Unfinished).

'Then the Lord Jesus . . . was received up into heaven'

BRIGHT portals of the sky,
Embossed with sparkling stars,
Doors of eternity,
With diamantiné bars,
Your arras rich uphold,
Loose all your bolts and springs,
Ope wide your leaves of gold,
That in your roofs may come the King of kings.

Scarfed in a rosy cloud,
He doth ascend the air;
Straight doth the moon him shroud
With her resplendent hair;
The next encrystalled light
Submits to him its beams,
And he doth trace the height
Of that fair lamp which flames of beauty streams.

He towers those golden bounds
He did to sun bequeath;
The higher wandering rounds
Are found his feet beneath;
The Milky Way comes near,
Heaven's axle seems to bend,
Above each turning sphere
That, robed in glory, heaven's King may ascend. . . .

Now each ethereal gate
To him hath opened been;
And glory's King in state
His palace enters in;

Now come is this high priest
In the most holy place,
Not without blood addressed,
With glory heaven, the earth to crown with grace.

Stars which all eyes were late,
And did with wonder burn,
His name to celebrate,
In flaming tongues them turn;
Their orby crystals move
More active than before,
And entheate from above,
Their sovereign Prince laud, glorify, adore.

The quires of happy souls,
Waked with that music sweet,
Whose descant care controls,
Their Lord in triumph meet;
The spotless sprites of light
His trophies do extol,
And, arched in squadrons bright,
Greet their great Victor in his capitol.

O glory of the heaven!
O sole delight of earth!
To thee all power be given,
God's uncreated birth!
Of mankind lover true,
Indearer of his wrong,
Who dost the world renew,
Still be thou our salvation and our song!

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

entheate] divinely inspired.

ENVOY

Christ in the Universe

WITH this ambiguous earth
His dealings have been told us. These abide:
The signal to a maid, the human birth,
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

But not a star of all
The innumerable host of stars has heard
How he administered this terrestrial ball.
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of his earth-visiting feet
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
Heart-shattering secret of his way with us.

No planet knows that this
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,
May his devices with the heavens be guessed,
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way
Or his bestowals there be manifest.

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O, be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

ALICE MEYNELL.

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